This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

WIDENER
HN PEJ6 I

21478.32
*

Harvard College Library

THE GIFT OF

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

THE

CHRONICLES OF WALTHAM.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE SUBALTERN,"

"THE COUNTRY CURATE," &c.

Man is dear to man, the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have bee
Themselves the fathers, and the dealers out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.

WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1835.

21478.32

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
THE GIFT OF
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
Aug 4, 1930

30-167
17.3

THE

OVERSEER'S DAUGHTER.

(CONTINUED.)

little favourable to its growth, repeatedly visited her himself, and still more frequently sent his wife to see her. But neither the one nor the other could prevail upon her to taste a morsel of food, or to take other measures for preserving her health.

"Let me die! let me die in peace!" was the only answer they received to their kind entreaties: "I do not wish to live—there is nothing for which I should live. Oh, let me die, and die alone, and I will thank you with my last breath!"

"But you must think of your defence, poor child," replied the governor; "you must not sacrifice reputation as well as life. Even if you be guilty, a skilful advocate may get you off; and there is that about you which assures me that you are not intentionally guilty. Have you the means of hiring counsel?"

"Oh, leave me, leave me! I have no defence to make, I want no counsel; I am the most guilty, the most forlorn, the most miserable creature that crawls the earth."

"Perhaps so, poor girl!" replied the governor, deeply affected: "you may have done many things amiss, and your present situation too surely proves it; but that you are guilty of stealing these diamonds, I no more believe than that I stole them myself."

A momentary gleam darted from Charlotte's eyes as she exclaimed, "Would that I were as innocent of all other crimes as I am of that!"

"And yet you will allow your life to fall a sacrifice rather than shake off this oppression, which under any circumstances would be wrong, but which in your case is sinful. Remember, that there is another world than this; and that we have no more right to throw away the lives which God has given for some wise purpose, by our indolence, than we have to take them with our own hands."

Charlotte looked at him bitterly, while she shook her head.

"At least permit me to send the chaplain," said the governor: "he is a feeling and a considerate person, and will pray with you, and for you, if he can do nothing else."

"'Have you ever learned to pray, Charlotte?'" exclaimed she, raising herself on her elbow, —"ay, these were his very words,— 'Have you ever learned to pray?' and when I said, 'No, papa—you never taught me,' he answered; 'Then go and learn.' What if I had learned? was it not then too late?"

"Unhappy creature!" exclaimed the governor, his moral sense almost as much shocked by this last exhibition as his feelings had been wrung by those which preceded it. "If I am

to collect from these incoherent exclamations that you are the child of one who never taught you to pray, then are all your crimes and all your misfortunes sufficiently accounted for. And yet this is no reason why you should be left to perish: I will go and send the chaplain."

He went, without having any opposition made to his design by the wretched being in whose favour it had been formed; and chancing to meet the chaplain almost immediately, the latter repaired at once to Charlotte's cell. He found her still sitting up, as if the excitement which roused her when the subject of prayer was introduced had not yet passed away. He gazed in her pale yet beautiful face, and all the softer emotions of his soul being suddenly called into play, the man accustomed to attend daily on the most obdurate of his race was affected to weeping. Charlotte fixed her large eyes upon him, and saw the tears rolling over his cheeks.

"You weep, sir," said she; "you weep for me. Alas! I cannot weep for myself,—neither can I pray."

"Then I will pray for thee, thou bruised reed," answered the chaplain; and kneeling down by the side of her bed, he offered an earnest appeal to the throne of mercy. At first

Charlotte seemed scarcely aware of what was going on. By degrees, however, her attention was riveted; and when the good man besought Him who tempereth the winds to the shorn lamb, and allayeth the storm of passion in the human heart, to remove from her a portion of the load with which she was afflicted, her lips moved, and she uttered the word "Amen." And then was the fountain of her tears broken up, and the large drops coursed one another over her cheeks, till the loose wrapper in which her slender form was enveloped became wetted through.

"O that I had learned to do this in my childhood!" cried she, clasping her hands together. "O that I had been taught to feel that there is one friend who never forsakes us, unless we first of all forsake ourselves! How different might have been my fate!"

"Unhappy creature!" replied the chaplain: "is it now for the first time that you have listened to the language of prayer? Is it now that you have begun to look for consolation in your sorrows to the only source which never fails us?"

"It is even so, sir," replied she, burying her face in her hands. "A child of shame, brought up in irreligion,—the victim of a misplaced passion—the dupe of an—— Oh, why

should I heap reproaches upon him? No, sir, no,—I never learned to pray; I never had before me the example except of scoffing and profaneness; and now, when my heart is breaking, where can I look for support?"

"To that heaven which you have been taught to deride, poor child," replied the chaplain earnestly; "to that Saviour whom you have never learned to know,—to Him who hath promised that 'those which come to him he will in nowise cast out,' and who never has despised, and never will despise a broken and a contrite heart."

Charlotte had sometimes attended Divine service at Waltham church; she was not, therefore, entirely ignorant either of the language of Scripture, or of the forms of that devotion which she was now invited to practise; and the spark being judiciously fanned by the excellent person who sat by her bedside, a flame was roused of which the warmth and the brightness surprised herself. She did pray, and pray earnestly—not for deliverance out of immediate trouble—not for defence from impending danger, but for pardon of the numerous errors of which she had been guilty, and for strength to bear with patience the evils which they had brought on. Nor did the exercise fail to shed a calm over her outward man-

ner and her inward feelings, such as gave both to her attendant and herself the greatest satisfaction. The chaplain was, indeed, too wise to over-act his part. He had been an instrument in accomplishing much when he brought her to look up without despair; he did not esteem it prudent to risk the loss of such 'vantage-ground by pushing the thing farther; but, promising to see her again at an early hour next morning, he took his leave.

"That girl will not be in a condition to take her place at the bar on Monday," said he to the governor; "indeed, I do not think she will ever stand before a human tribunal at all. The principle of life is undermined; and unless I greatly deceive myself, her decay will be rapid. I think you had better get the trial put off."

The governor gladly acted upon the hint. The physician being called in, pronounced at once, that to summon Charlotte into court would occasion immediate death; and the proper steps being taken, her trial was postponed till the sessions after. It is not often that a detention in gaol can be esteemed by the party detained a visitation of mercy; yet in Charlotte's case the hand of a kind Providence had never been so conspicuous. From day to day the chaplain attended her; and the ice

having been fairly broken at the outset, her conversion from error to truth was the consequence. Sorrow, indeed, did the office for which it is almost always sent. She saw that the imaginary principles of honour and virtue had been with her as they are with all men—fences of reed against the inroads of passion. In spite of an extreme delicacy of sentiment, for which, as well as for her abhorrence of falsehood, she was indebted to nature, she had first become the victim of a villain's lust, and then his tool in the perpetration of the basest crimes. Why should this have been? Because honour and virtue, unless they be founded on a proper sense of religion, will never lift either man or woman above the tide of strong temptation, furnishing, as they do, no place of refuge to the frail one who has once erred, nor offering any solid sources of comfort amid the consequences of error. Charlotte felt all this to be the case, now that light had broken in upon her darkness; and she became more composed in proportion as the conviction grew stronger, that now for the first time had she learned to put upon existence its real value.

In pronouncing, as he did, that the principle of life was undermined in his patient, the chaplain had committed no error. Each new morn-

ing found her more weak in body, though far stronger in mind; till at last, while the vital energies seemed rapidly wearing out, the spirit became composed, and even cheerful. It was then that the chaplain conceived himself authorised to question her more fully than he had yet done as to the events of her past life, especially as to the causes which led to her present situation both of disgrace and danger. Charlotte would have gladly been silent on that head. She had no wish to injure any one—and least of all the man whom, in spite of all the wrongs he had done her, she yet had not learned to hate, even while she blamed him. But when her kind friend assured her that to speak the truth was a duty which she owed both to society and to herself, she told him all without reserve. One circumstance alone she besought him to abstain from inquiring into: she wished to conceal both her own name and the name of her betrayer; because, to publish the one would load it with needless disgrace, and a knowledge of the other would doubtless bring the individual into trouble.

"That may be, my dear," replied the chaplain; "but if he deserve to be brought into trouble, and if by his punishment the wrongs done to injured parties can be redressed, how is it possible to conceal his name without sacri-

ficing the innocent to the guilty? You say that you have every reason to suspect him of having abstracted the countess's jewels while he was conversing with you?"

"I *have* said so," replied Charlotte; "and I cannot, without speaking falsely, say otherwise."

"Is it then your wish that a lady, to whom you owe every reparation for the fraud upon her good-nature to which you were a party, should not only have her feelings outraged and her confidence abused, but be plundered of her property?"

"Surely not, surely not!" answered Charlotte: "yet if I accuse Marshall——"

"His name is Marshall, then, is it?" demanded the chaplain.

"Oh, I have betrayed him, then, after all!" exclaimed she. "Wretched creature that I am! does the power of controlling my very words fail me?"

"Dear child," replied the chaplain, "what you did was done unwittingly; and were it even wrong itself, no blame could attach to you. But it is not wrong. This Marshall must be the most heartless as well as the most abandoned ruffian that ever bore a human shape. You owe it to society that he should not be permitted to go longer at large: you

owe it to yourself, and to the lady whom he has robbed, that he should be put upon his trial. I pray you, therefore, not to leave the matter incomplete, but to inform me where he is to be found."

"I do not know, indeed I do not; I never knew where he lived. We met at first by chance; and ever afterwards since then, I came to him at times and places of his appointing. I could not tell, were I ever so willing, where to look for him."

The chaplain saw by the earnestness with which this statement was made, that it contained no equivocation. He therefore abstained from pressing the subject further; though by putting various questions he drew from her such a description of Marshall's person as might serve to guide a skilful officer in tracing him. Of course, he did not inform Charlotte why the description was sought; and he hindered her from brooding over it, by going on to ask whether she had any friends in London or elsewhere whom she would wish to see. The poor girl was silent for some time, and her eyes filled with tears, as she answered that there were friends in town whom she would indeed be glad to send for, if she thought they would come and see her in such a place. She then named the Johnsons; and the chaplain, after promising

to communicate with them, and encouraging her to hope the best, took his leave.

Fatigued as she was with the long, and to her the exciting, conversation of which the substance has been given above, Charlotte did not fail to derive from it very considerable consolation. Her bosom was at length unburthened of its load. She had made a candid confession of her own errors; and, though Marshall might have been somewhat endangered by it, there was that within which told her, that to screen him from the fate which his crimes merited was an act of something more than selfish weakness. Not that she experienced the slightest desire to avenge on his head her own personal wrongs; on the contrary, she felt that she was both able and willing to forgive all;—but the chaplain's reasoning, especially as regarded the Countess of Beddington, had carried conviction to her mind. If he were the thief—and could she doubt it?—he must take the consequences, rather than that the injured party should fail to obtain redress. If he were not, as she laid nothing to his charge beyond a mere suspicion, at her hands he suffered no wrong. Moreover, the prospect of seeing the good Johnsons cheered and enlivened her: neither was it a delusive one; for no sooner were they informed of the sad plight

of their *protégée*, than whatever feeling of indignation her abrupt abandonment might have excited died away, and she—for that day his business carried him into the country—made haste to visit her. It is not necessary to add, that the meeting was a deeply affecting one.

"O that you had consulted me more, and made me more your confidant!" said Mrs. Johnson, after she had folded Charlotte in her arms and wept upon her neck. "This at least might have been avoided; for you have been the dupe throughout of one of the most accomplished villains that ever preyed upon his fellow-creatures. Thank God, however, the scoundrel is in the hands of justice; so that from one charge at least—that of committing an offence so atrocious as the robbery of one who trusted and behaved kindly to you, you will be able to clear yourself."

"Taken!" cried Charlotte: "is Marshall taken? When, how?—Pray, pray tell me! And his punishment, what will it be?"

"It is a long story,—too long for you to hear, were I in a condition to tell it; but I am not: and as to his punishment, never trouble your head about that. He must first of all be tried; and then, depend upon it that his sentence will be a thousand-fold more le-

nient than his crimes deserve. However, I did not come to talk to you about any thing of that sort; my business rather was to ascertain whether there were no friends at a distance whom you would wish to see; your mother—your sister—your child—"

"My child! my baby!" cried Charlotte wildly, as if a new light had suddenly burst upon her. "How has every feeling been overborne in me by one fatal, fatal passion! Bring me my child! Yes, yes, let me see his sweet face once more, kiss his sweet lips, and ask that God to whom I have learned in prison to pray, to be his guardian!—My child—let me embrace my child!"

"I guessed as much," replied Mrs. Johnson; "and Johnson promised to go on this day to Waltham, so that the baby and your mother also might be with you to-morrow."

"I cannot thank you as I ought," exclaimed Charlotte. "And yet, tell me how came you to discover either my name or my birth-place: I do not think that I ever stated either to you."

"No, my love," answered Mrs. Johnson, "you did not; but you cannot suppose we would have treated you as we did, had we been without all information on these heads. Johnson brought you home as a stranger doubt-

less; but he made it his business to trace you to your parish after he returned, and to collect as much of your history as strengthened the feelings which your desolate condition had awakened. We knew all that you had suffered previously at the hands of that scoundrel: had we been aware that the acquaintance was renewed in London, we should have done our best to put a stop to it."

The interview did not last much longer, nor was any other subject discussed of which it is necessary to give an account. Mrs. Johnson saw indeed with a mixture of satisfaction and grief, that while the temper of her young friend's mind was in every respect improved and strengthened, her frame was getting less and less able to bear up against the pressure of thought; she would not therefore permit it to be entirely broken down by a continued discussion of topics so likely to disturb it, but once more embracing Charlotte, and blessing her as if she had been her own daughter, the kind-hearted woman returned to her home.

nor the only false one under which he has passed."

"I will see him," answered Charlotte, overcoming by a strong effort her agitation. "Let the good chaplain visit me first, and I will see him afterwards."

The chaplain was not slow in attending to the message of which his brother functionary was the bearer. He took his seat beside the sick-bed within ten minutes after the medical gentleman quitted it, and grasped between both his the thin, white, attenuated hand which Charlotte held out to welcome him.

"You must support and direct me, dear sir," said she, "through a terrible trial on which I am about to enter. How shall I receive Marshall? What shall I say to him? Surely I may forgive him; and if there linger in this heart some sparks of more than pity for him still, say whether I am bound to extinguish them. I will not disgrace your kindness, on that you may rely; for I have sought strength from heaven, and my prayer has been answered. Yet I would fain have your advice; and if it cost me more than all that I have yet suffered, I will at least strive to follow it."

"I do not distrust you in the least," replied the chaplain. "I neither distrust your

resolution, nor blame the present temper of your mind. Only let no entreaties on his part draw you into a promise that you will hold back aught that may be necessary for the furtherance of the ends of justice. To forgive even him is your duty; and you will do it. But beyond that let no remnant of a feeling, misplaced from the outset, not unholy in its nature, lead you. Remember that with the world your business is well-nigh done: the part which it now remains for you to act must raise your affections and your wishes to heaven."

"Then if he implore me to conceal what I know of that robbery, I must reject his prayer?"

"You must, Charlotte; and what is more, you need not hesitate to do so; for all that you could tell is known already, and the proofs even of that crime are too decisive to permit the smallest chance of his escaping detection."

"Now pray for me, dear sir, that I may be strengthened to perform well whatever part I may be called upon to perform."

The chaplain complied with her request; and in the petitions which he offered up, she joined earnestly yet calmly. When he had ended, she desired in a firm tone that Marshall might be admitted; but as she did not

express any wish that the worthy divine should withdraw, he considered it unnecessary to expose her, unsupported, to the wiles and sophistries of one whose influence over her was clearly not yet rooted out. If, however, the chaplain lingered where he did under the idea that it would be the object of her betrayer's visit to work upon her tenderness in his own behalf, the event proved that he was mistaken. Marshall came heavily ironed, and advanced towards the bed on which his victim lay; yet so completely had despair and remorse altered the very lineaments of his face, that she found some difficulty in recognising him.

"I come, Charlotte," said he in a deep sepulchral tone, "to beseech you, ere my doom is fixed, to forgive, if it be possible to do so, the many wrongs I have inflicted on you."

"Marshall," replied she, "I forgive them all, truly, freely, unreservedly; even as I trust that my own sins will be forgiven when I stand before the great judgment-seat."

She held out her hand towards him; but the wretched man refused to take it. "No, Charlotte, no," cried he, "that would be too much! I must not again pollute even that hand by holding it in mine. But if the gratitude of one whose hours are numbered have any value in your eyes, take all that I have to give—un-

less it be this proof of my remorse and self-condemnation."

"This is more than I require, much more than I ever expected," said she, while her voice faltered a little and her lip quivered: "but the forgiveness which you ask, and I tender, will be incomplete if I fail to add one word of advice. As you hope for peace of mind here, as you hope for pardon hereafter, let the future be devoted entirely to reformation. You may yet live many years, if not in this country, still among your fellow-men elsewhere. Oh, Marshall! let them be years of penitence and humiliation,—such years as mine would have been had it been God's will to prolong them."

Marshall groaned aloud. "You do not know all my guilt," answered he, "even against yourself, nor the end to which it must bring me. I shall be a spectacle for gaping crowds to gaze at before three days pass over our heads."

"What is it that you mean?" cried she eagerly. "Your crime is a heinous one, but does not, they tell me, incur a capital punishment."

"Not that crime to which you are privy," replied he, "but another. No, no, Charlotte, nothing can save me."

"Do not say so! do not say so!" exclaimed

the poor girl, now excited into a forgetfulness of all her previous resolutions: "they cannot carry me into court to bear witness against you, and they shall not wring from me any statements here!"

"Oh, what a heart has my villany broken! exclaimed Marshall, dashing his hands together; a movement which, causing his chains to rattle, went like a death-knell through her brain. "Devoted as you are, not even your forbearance could save me. I tell you that I shall suffer, but not for that. You cannot save me; and if you knew all, even you would not."

"I would,—I can,—I will!" shrieked she. "You are not fit to die: you have not yet made your peace with heaven; you must not die!"

Here the chaplain, who had hitherto kept back full of admiration at the scene of which he was a witness, hastily interfered. He saw that the prolongation of such an interview, while it could accomplish no benefit to the one party, would inevitably operate upon the other very mischievously. To permit its continuance, indeed, would be to expose, in his judgment, religious principles of only a day's growth, to a contest with feelings cherished for years, and now recalled by the force of circumstances to their original strength. He therefore entreated

Marshall to withdraw; commending him, however, for the tone which his conversation had assumed, and giving Charlotte full credit for the gentleness of her nature and the purity of her intentions. But Charlotte was too highly excited to pay heed to such reasoning. "We are never to meet again!" she cried: "he is going to his death. Oh, do not part us now! He is to me everything, everything. Nay, let me rise; I will go into court and declare that he had no hand in the robbery. By me, by me only was it perpetrated; and I call you to witness, sir, that I have said so in the presence of ——."

"Charlotte, for Heaven's sake stop!" said Marshall. "This is no time to appeal to God or man in support of what you know to be false. I did commit the robbery; barbarously, basely stole the jewels, and left you to incur the blame and bear the punishment. But I repeat, that, were this doubtful, there is another charge against me from which I cannot escape; so that your evidence, if taken, would avail nothing."

"You must die!" cried Charlotte: "then what have I to do with life?" She fell back as she uttered these words, entirely exhausted; and while she lay apparently unconscious of what was going forward, Marshall withdrew.

When she recovered, however, it was only to demand in a frantic tone what they had done with him: for neither the entreaties, nor the reasoning, nor the appeals of the chaplain to their past conversations, seemed to have the slightest effect upon her. It was at this juncture that footsteps sounded in the long passage outside, and that the feeble cry of an infant smote upon the ear. As if a magician's wand had touched her, Charlotte's whole demeanour underwent an instantaneous change. She sat up; she listened; a smile came over her countenance, like a sunbeam over a dark cloud; and when the door of the cell opened, and Mrs. Johnson entered bearing a child in her arms, all other feelings became absorbed in those of the mother.

"My babe! my boy!" cried the unfortunate girl. "Oh, give me my child!" and when they placed it in her arms, she first gazed in its face, and then covered it with kisses. "My sweet babe! my little solitary snowdrop! my poor orphan! bless thee, bless thee! The world will look cold on thee when I am gone; but thou art mine now, and mine thou wilt be when we meet again in heaven."

A flood of tears came to her relief, and never from that moment did the bitterness of anguish return. Even Marshall ceased, as it appeared,

to occupy a place in her thoughts: that is to say, she never spoke of him, she never alluded to him; but dividing her attention, as it were, between her infant and the practice of devotion, her mind resumed the calmness and tranquillity from which for a brief space it had been withdrawn. It is true that she seemed to experience considerable regret when it was announced that her mother had refused to visit her. "I owe her, perhaps, little of kindness," said she, "and no example by which I could profit: but she is still my mother, and it would have been pleasant to receive her forgiveness — some tokens of reconciliation, ere I went hence. But God's will be done! You tell me she sent kind messages: I must accept them and be thankful."

If he had sustained a shock from the display of so much feeling on Charlotte's part during her last interview with Marshall, the good chaplain was restored to his former condition by contemplating the happy change that the arrival of her child had produced. He had not yet spoken to her about receiving the Sacrament. He opened the subject to her on the following day, and found, after a brief explanation, so much readiness, and more than readiness, to communicate, that considering the very precarious tenure by which her cord of life

held together, he conceived that he should not be justified in delaying the ceremony. Most readily her friends the Johnsons agreed to partake of the elements with her; and pleasant, albeit deeply affecting, was the conversation which she and they and the chaplain held on the evening previous to their administration. Indeed, so gratifying were the answers that Charlotte made to the several interrogatories which the good man put to her, that he ventured at last to refer to her connexion with Marshall, and to the manner in which she had last spoken to him. The experiment, somewhat hazardous, led to results more and more satisfactory.

"Marshall and I have taken leave of one another for ever," said she. "I repeat before you all, what I said to himself, that by me he is forgiven. But I do not think, were God to restore my health, and his life to be prolonged, that I would ever see him again. Alas! I fear that I have already erred in talking so incoherently as I did when he stood beside me. But that sin also will, I trust, be pardoned, for I repent of it in dust and ashes."

There needed but this last display of right feeling to testify to the strength of her faith and the depth of her penitence. With herself the was now at peace; yet, as she gazed upon

her babe, the tear would from time to time gather in her eye, and fall down upon the forehead of the infant as it smiled in her face. The movement was not lost upon her friends.

"You are anxious about your boy, Charlotte," said Mrs. Johnson kindly.

"I trust that at least is not sinful," replied she; "for who will care for him when his mother's head is in the dust?"

"I will," answered Mrs. Johnson, with difficulty controlling her emotion. "He shall be to me as my own. We have no son, and when he grows up he will help Johnson, and more than repay us for the care we may bestow upon him."

Charlotte could not answer. She was able only to press the hand of her benefactress, and to place the child in her arms.

And now the hour came round at which the Holy Sacrament was to be administered. The elements were already on the table, and the chaplain was preparing to commence the service, when Charlotte, whose strength gave way rapidly, moved her lips, and with difficulty said,

"Is Marshall's trial over?"

She was answered in the affirmative.

"Has he been found guilty?"

"He has."

"And his fate?"

There was no answer, nor did she again demand one, but added only the word "When?" The reply was "To-morrow." She closed her eyes for an instant, seemed to breathe a secret prayer, and was herself again. The ceremony now went forward, and Charlotte did her part in it with the liveliest devotion. The other parties were also much affected; more especially when, at its close, Charlotte, pointing to the infant, which lay sleeping by her side, again made an effort to speak.

"Take him to his home, dear Mrs. Johnson—I will not think even of him again. Take him, and tell him, when he is old enough to understand, that his poor mother died penitent, and blessed him with her latest breath."

There was no bearing up against a scene like this with any degree of fortitude. All who witnessed it wept aloud; and the child was removed, as its mother desired, that evening to Coleman-street.

The night wore on, to Charlotte a sleepless but not a miserable one; for her thoughts were in a better world, and her friend Mrs. Johnson sat by her side. No conversation passed between them, nor indeed did Charlotte move, except to have her parched lips occasionally moistened, till the morning came in,

and the prison-clock struck eight. Not with the completion of the hour, however, did the bell cease to toll. It continued a slow and solemn knell, which seemed to rouse the fading energies of Charlotte's mind, and to give a momentary power of articulation to her tongue.

"Why does the bell toll?" asked she of the governor's wife, who had entered.

"It is the passing-bell, my dear," was the answer: "a prisoner is going to execution."

"Marshall!" cried the poor girl; "wait one moment for me."

These were the last words she uttered. The spirit passed with them from its tenement of clay, and when they looked again at the speaker they saw but her corse. She was buried at the expense of her kind friends, and now sleeps in St. Bride's churchyard.

THE MAN OF MANY NAMES.

THE MAN OF MANY NAMES.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILY PORTRAITS.

Before we revert to the state of affairs at Waltham, it will be necessary to give some account of the individual who played so important a part in the tragedy which has just been recited, and to whose disgraceful end allusion has been made.

In a remote corner of the beautiful county of Devon, at no great distance from the river Exe, stands one of those picturesque and unassuming mansions, which, more perhaps than any other class of buildings that are to be found within the compass of the four seas, give their peculiar character of civilization and refinement to almost every English landscape. The mansion in question is a vicarage-house; and the traveller who may chance to visit that part of the county of which it is the ornament will

not fail, if he keep his eyes open, to recognise it. Thrown back from the bank of the stream so far that by him who stands upon the lawn the brawling of the water will scarce be heard, the vicarage lifts its modest head just beneath the slope of the hill; a small portion of which being included in the glebe and tastefully planted, forms a background to the little scene, which can be rightly estimated only after it has been seen. In front, and sloping down towards the water, are the lawn, the shrubbery, and the kitchen-garden, all of them fenced in by well-trimmed hedges, and each separated from the other by screens of laurestinas.

In that fair cottage, of which the white walls, the sloping roof, the arched windows, and the trellised veranda are all in perfect keeping with the objects that surround them, Cyril Trevenean, *alias* William Marshall, *alias* Bill Jones, first saw the light. He was the son of the Rev. Montague Trevenean, one of those overpaid and bloated pluralists whose wealth and indolence bring disgrace on their profession, as well as on the religion of which they are the teachers: for Mr. Trevenean was not only vicar of Heavitree, but rector of St. Mary besides; the united proceeds of which brought him in, after the payment of necessary expenses, a clear annual revenue of four hundred and

fifty pounds. To entitle him to this enormous remuneration, moreover, he had absolutely nothing to do. On Sundays, to be sure, he read prayers, and preached twice,—sometimes thrice: on other days he ministered to the necessities, temporal as well as spiritual, of more than two thousand persons, almost all of whom were mere paupers, and scattered over a surface of nearly thirty-five square miles. He attended all vestry meetings likewise; gave to them the benefit of his wisdom and experience, without which they would have often gone wrong; dispensed more of hospitality than nine-tenths of the laymen who possessed three times his means, and throughout the whole circle of his neighbourhood was the pattern, which was everywhere more or less felt, of gentle manners, pure principles, and a highly cultivated understanding. But then Mr. Trevenean, like the rest of his order, could not be numbered among the productive classes: he added nothing to the stock of national wealth; he only sought to elevate and improve, as far as his influence extended, the national character. Now it is well known, that except by the dissemination of newspapers and the agency of mechanics' institutes, there are very few methods of acting upon the national character which the political economist can sanction; and hence he whose views extend no

further than to make his neighbours fear God, honour the king, and be contented with their lot, well deserves to be denounced as a useless member of society. Doubtless it was upon this principle that Mr. Trevenean, like his brethren in general, suffered much reproach in places and among circles where his person was unknown. For it is a curious fact, that it is exactly among such as are total strangers to their habits and style of living, that the English clergy find the most unsparing denouncers of their vices, their indolence, and their unpopularity.

Had Mr. Trevenean possessed no other pecuniary resources than those which his benefices supplied, it would have been impossible for him either to do the good to which all around him bore witness, or to maintain his station in society. Mr. Trevenean was, however, a living instance of the practical benefits of a system which, on theoretical grounds, is generally condemned. The younger brother of a wealthy house, he brought into a profession which gave him the possible chance of civil rank and large emoluments more than, in point of fact, the profession was ever likely to afford to him; and, in doing so, rendered the good things of this life subservient to the noblest purposes; because they enabled him to exercise an influence over the minds of his neighbours such as,

without them, no man, in the present state of society, may ever hope to attain. Still, having married early in life, and being the father of a large family, he did not find that the interest of a younger brother's fortune was more than adequate to make up what was wanting in the emoluments of office. When, therefore, his brother, Sir Charles Trevenean, Bart. of Morley Park, in Cornwall, proposed to relieve him of the charge of one of his sons, and to educate him with his cousin, the vicar conceived that it was his duty to close with the offer. He accordingly agreed to render up Cyril, the eldest of his household flock, to the guidance of his uncle, partly because the uncle had taken an especial fancy to the boy while yet an infant, partly because his age corresponded most nearly with the lad of whom he was destined to be the companion.

Cyril Trevenean had attained to his tenth year when he became an inmate of Morley Park. He was a remarkably handsome youth, with fine large dark eyes, dark brown hair, an open, and, as it seemed, ingenuous countenance, and a form which bore about it every conceivable indication of strength and agility, mixed up with surpassing grace. His manners were likewise attractive in no ordinary degree, especially among persons who love to be flattered and courted;

and his abilities were soon pronounced by the domestic tutor, to whose care the cousins were entrusted, to be of a very superior order. His relative, on the other hand, though only by three months his junior, was in every other respect far behind him. In the first place, being a delicate boy, his growth was considerably stunted; and there was a pallor on his cheek, and a languid expression in his blue eye, which seemed to indicate the constant pressure of suffering. Yet was Reginald Trevenean a sweet child. Gentle he was, and confiding,—a creature who appeared as if he must always lean upon another for support,—whose affections were all of the most overflowing kind, and who never could perceive a blemish in the character of one whom he had once elected to be his friend. Great, therefore, was his delight when his father announced to him that he was about to have a companion of his own age in every respect worthy of his confidence; and full and unrestricted was the share of affection which he bestowed upon Cyril from the first moment they became associated together in the school-room.

In the lives of schoolboys, events very seldom occur out of which even an augury of their future career may be fairly collected. There is nothing, therefore, so ungenerous to-

wards a lad of twelve or thirteen, as to come to any decision on his character; for circumstances tend so much to mould, if they do not give existence itself to dispositions and propensities, that to prognosticate the man's destiny from a consideration of the youth's proceedings is at once unkind and unjust. It required, however, no great depth of penetration in the present instance to discover that, if ever a trial of skill should arise on any subject between the two young Treveneans, the match would not be a fair one. Cyril, it was quite evident, had acquired a complete ascendency over his cousin before they were six months together. There was not a thought in Reginald's heart which he did not lay bare to his relative; there was not a wish of which he was conscious, that he did not disclose to him. Nay, so perfect was the mastery of the one mind over the other, that Cyril became ere long the medium of communication between Reginald and his father. If the boy had a point to carry, or a request to make, he soon ceased to make it directly, as he used to do, preferring rather that Cyril should be the spokesman, and of course the party whose wishes were gratified. And it is a fact, not perhaps entirely without parallel, that with this tacit sort of arrangement between the cousins Sir Charles appeared

about him. I hope we may never have cause to repent that he became Reginald's companion."

"Now, my dear, you must excuse me if I say that it is entirely the mother that speaks here. You are annoyed, as well as myself, because your son is not as far before his cousin as he happens to be behind him: but there is this difference between us,—that, while I lament my own boy's inferiority, I am willing to allow it; whereas you would fain discern in Cyril some bad qualities which shall place him on a level at least with his companion."

"Indeed, Sir Charles, you mistake. I entertain no such desire; I speak only what my mind suggests, after a good deal of watching and anxiety."

"Why, what have you discovered about the child that you disapprove of?"

"It is not perhaps quite easy to answer that question to your satisfaction; but if you insist on having a reply, I tell you, that I don't like the means he adopts to ingratiate himself into your good graces. Why should he be the chief speaker on all occasions? Why should not your own son command at least as free access to his father as a stranger? And don't you perceive how he has trained Reginald also to look

up to him? Depend upon it, that boy has about him a great deal of art."

Sir Charles laughed, while he repeated his assertion, that all these whims and fancies were but the offspring of maternal jealousy. "Why should Cyril be the chief speaker?" continued he: "why, but because among boys, as well as among men, character and talent always find their level. Rather ask why it is that Reginald should have yielded to Cyril the place which Nature had allotted to himself. The fact is, that the one is a boy of energy and decision; the other, a weak, puny creature,—gentle, I grant you, and kind-hearted, but no more fit to bustle his way through life than he is to ride on horseback across the sea. No, no, my dear; so far from regretting that Reginald has been thrown thus early into the society of his cousin, we shall, if the children live, have every reason to rejoice; for whatever good may come to our son will have been infused into him by the force of his companion's example, you may depend upon it."

The reasoning of her husband made as little impression on Lady Trevenean's mind as her hints and insinuations appeared to have done on his. They separated therefore, as most disputants do, more and more confirmed in

their previous prejudices, and more and more disposed to exhibit by their manner to the parties concerned the sentiments which each of them harboured. Thus, the lady became cold and distant to Cyril; the gentleman more affectionate than ever. Nor was Cyril slow in detecting that the estimation in which he was held in different parts of the house was far from being the same. Towards Lady Trevenean he therefore acquired a violent distaste; towards her husband his advances became every day more pressing. Still Cyril was, even at thirteen years of age, too profound a politician to make any display of feelings which were calculated to annoy. In Lady Trevenean's company he was generally silent; but it appeared to be the silence of one who is grieved,—not of a youth labouring under irritation, and anxious to give it vent. On the contrary, his attentions, whenever an opportunity presented of offering them, were obsequious; and he uttered no complaints when they were rejected. At the same time he did not fail so far to exhibit his chagrin, that the commiseration of his patron was very often roused in his favour.

"I see you think that your aunt does not love you, Cyril," said Sir Charles to him one day, after the lady had spoken sharply in reply to some tender of personal service; "and I am

afraid the thought makes you unhappy. Dismiss it from your mind without scruple. Your aunt loves you sincerely; not so much, perhaps, as she does Reginald,—for that, you know, would be unnatural: but she is as fond of you as a woman can be of any child that is not her own; and I, you must perceive, make no difference between you and your cousin. So, cheer up, my boy, and don't let trifles cast you down."

"You are indeed more than a father to me, sir," replied Cyril, while a few tears escaped from between his long eyelashes; "and I am sure that I love you as if you were my father. And Lady Trevenean, too,—I would fain convince her, that if she does entertain any suspicions of me, they are groundless; but she will not allow it."

"Suspicions, boy! what could she suspect? No, no, Cyril; don't give way to fancies. Some people have one kind of manner, some another; and if there be a little coldness in your aunt's outward bearing, rest assured there is nothing of the sort in her heart. Nobody can see you without loving you.—But where is Reginald?"

"I left him copying the exercise I wrote—— I mean, writing his exercise for to-morrow. He will be ready in five minutes; and then may we go shooting with you?"

"To be sure you may, my boy. But what was that you said about copying an exercise?"

"Oh, never mind that, sir," replied Cyril with a smile, and making towards the library door: "it was a mistake on my part, that is all; and you ought not to notice it."

"Well, well, go thy ways; thou art a noble fellow, at all events. I wish to God Reginald had been like that boy!" continued he, when the door closed on his nephew and he was left alone. "It is the strangest thing in the world, and the hardest, that a child on whom the honour of a family depends should be both weak in mind and fragile in body! How it galls me to behold so many proofs of his unfitness for his station! Zounds! I could almost wish——But never mind; the thing can't be helped: he is a monstrous lucky fellow in having so useful a friend in Cyril. That boy entwines himself round my heart astonishingly."

As he uttered this, the youths entered together; Cyril arrayed in his shooting garb, and carrying his gun; Reginald in his ordinary dress, and looking more than usually delicate.

"What! Reginald, don't you go with us?" demanded Sir Charles.

"Not to-day, papa," answered his son timidly. "I promised mamma to accompany her in the carriage as far as Truro; and I feel, besides, that I should not be fit to stand the walk."

"Do as you please," answered Sir Charles coldly: "by all means tie yourself to your mother's apron-string. Come, Cyril, let us be off."

They departed, leaving Reginald a good deal cast down, though not till Cyril had somewhat ostentatiously requested leave to stay and amuse his cousin. This, however, was refused; indeed Reginald himself, while he thanked him with full eyes for the proposal, would not listen to it for a moment: so Cyril and his uncle were soon tramping towards the cover, with spaniels and keepers attending.

"I am afraid Reginald's health is very bad," said Sir Charles: "I wish, Cyril, he had been your brother, and not your cousin."

"Ah, but then, sir, he would have been my younger brother, you know; and that would not have been fair."

"Why not? If there be two brothers in a family, one must be older than the other; and why should it not be you? But that is all nonsense. His brother you cannot be in blood, though I trust you will always be brothers in

affection; so that I may treat you in life and death as if you were both my own. Now, tell me, Cyril, is Reginald really as delicate as he pretends to be,—or is he indolent?"

"No, sir, I should not call him indolent, certainly. I think he has no great fondness for exercise either of mind or body; but indolent is a very strong term. I am sure, likewise, that he is delicate; though, perhaps, if he were to give way to it less, he might gain more ahead of his sickliness."

"That is precisely my view of the case," replied Sir Charles; "and yet the medical men describe him as a very sickly youth, and recommend great care in treating him. Well, well, we can't alter our natures. I think he is a well-intentioned boy; weak, perhaps, but free from vice: don't you think so?"

"He has no vice. The worst that can be said of him is, that he wants courage always to do right, even when he wishes to avoid doing wrong. But time and the care of our excellent tutor will overcome all that."

"Yes, my boy, and the force of your advice and example. I cannot sufficiently thank Providence for sending you here; my son would have been otherwise lost."

They were by this time at the skirt of the

cover; and the sport was, as usual, excellent. As usual, likewise, Sir Charles exceeded his nephew's number of birds by three; and they returned home to a late dinner more and more pleased with one another.

CHAPTER II.

LOVE'S FIRST LESSON.

TIME passed; and ere the lads had accomplished their eighteenth year, Cyril was as completely master of his uncle's ear and affections as if he had been the son, and Reginald the nephew. The latter, indeed, appeared so thoroughly conscious of this fact, that in all situations, both at home and abroad, he played a secondary part; while all who came in contact with them, including Mr. Monro the tutor, gave to the aspiring stranger the deference, if such it may be termed, which the heir of Morley Park might have naturally claimed. Throughout the whole mansion indeed, from the saloon to the servants' hall, as well as among the keepers, markers, grooms, and other hangers-on, there were but two individuals that seemed resolute not to bow the knee to Baal. These were Lady Trevenean, and Mrs. Daller, who had nursed Reginald in his infancy, and who, continuing ever after to be treated as a

member of the family, transferred to it her undivided devotion. Many and earnest were the conferences which she held with her lady, and frequent the arguments which she used in order to bring about Cyril's expulsion. But Lady Trevenean knew that on that head she was destitute of power; and she therefore restrained the zeal of her kind-hearted dependant, at the same time that she struggled to suppress her own indignation.

Up to the period of which mention has just been made, the youths had been treated by others, and seemed to regard themselves, as mere boys. Their amusements, their occupations, their virtues and their vices, were all those of schoolboys; and as schoolboys they went and came, without any particular caution being displayed to watch their morals or direct their tastes. It was somewhat remarkable, too, that not once during a period of four years had Cyril solicited permission, or availed himself of the opportunities that were put in his way of visiting his native place. When his uncle spoke to him on the subject, his answer was uniformly the same: "I consider this as my home, dear sir, and you as my father. If you wish me to leave you, I will obey; but if my own inclinations are to be consulted, I cannot feel so happy anywhere as in your society;

and therefore I would rather remain where I am."

By Lady Trevenean, and Mrs. Daller the nurse, such conduct was spoken of as affording proof that the lad was utterly heartless. Sir Charles regarded it as evidence of an extraordinary devotion to himself, and became more and more devoted to his nephew in consequence.

The lads had now arrived at that time of life when the thought how it would be advisable to deal with them began to obtrude itself with increased frequency into Sir Charles's mind. His own plan was to have sent them to one of the English universities; but Lady Trevenean represented her son's constitution as so unequal to the wear and tear of a college life, that the father yielded to her remonstrances, and consented at least to defer the period of their matriculation. It was manifest, however, that to keep them much longer at home would do no good either to their morals or their manners. Strange to say, moreover, it was on Reginald, the sickly boy, that the life of comparative idleness which they were permitted to lead threatened to produce the worst consequences. Perplexing rumours of his depravity, particularly as regarded the females about the establishment, reached his father's ears; and at last a case was brought home to him, which

determined Sir Charles, let it cost what it might, at all events to remove him from a place where the facilities of doing wrong appeared to be both ample and alluring. The case was this:—

Lady Trevenean had brought up about her own person the orphan daughter of an old and faithful domestic, who, as she grew towards woman's estate, became, from her excessive beauty and artless demeanour, the admiration of all that beheld her. And Emma Freeman was indeed a lovely creature. Her fair flaxen hair, her soft, sweet, dark blue eyes, her delicate complexion, her light and fragile frame, gave her altogether the appearance of a creature not designed for this world; while her disposition was as affectionate, as flexible, as docile, as generous, and as modest, as the exquisite symmetry of her outward form might have led the spectator to expect. Being especially favoured by her mistress, Emma was permitted, as a child, to associate a great deal with the boys. No care was taken to interrupt the intimacy when the season of childhood had given place to that of youth; and the dejected air and fading roses on poor Emma's cheeks indicated, by-and-by, that it had not been continued for nothing. To come to the point at once;—though no one was able to say that the slightest act of indiscretion had ever

taken place in his or her presence, there were not wanting numbers to assert, that with one or other of the young gentlemen Emma had been too intimate; and that time would doubtless give proof—probably of the strongest kind—to what extent the intimacy had gone.

The parties most interested in the faults both of the young and the old are said to be invariably the last to be told of them. This was especially the case on the present occasion; for though Lady Trevenean observed that her *protégée* looked ill and was out of spirits and unusually silent, as she had no right to suspect her of indiscretion, far less of vice, her compassion was the only feeling which the spectacle excited. She repeatedly questioned the poor girl as to the cause of her dejection; and, though answered only with floods of tears, she continued to attribute both the malady and its effects to a constitution manifestly of the most delicate kind. Mrs. Daller, the nurse, seemed however to be either sharper of vision or much more prone to suspect. "She did not fancy the young woman's appearance at all: Emma was no longer a child; she was old enough to know good from evil, and to choose either as she had a mind: and, for her part, she could not help thinking that it was not quite the thing to leave a young woman of seventeen running

wild with a couple of youths such as Master Reginald and his cousin."

"Why, Martha," replied her lady, "what am I to gather from all this? Surely you cannot mean to insinuate that Emma is not a good girl? far less that either Reginald or Cyril have abused the opportunities which my want of consideration may have thrown in their way?"

"I insinuate nothing, my lady: I only say plainly, that I should not be surprised if poor Emma, as your ladyship calls her, were a great deal more artful than you give her credit for; and that one or other of these boys has been drawn by her into a bit of a scrape."

"Now that is not like you, Martha," answered Lady Trevenean; "you are generally as charitable as the heart of man could desire, and I never knew you unjust before even in your suspicions. Depend upon it, if what you hint at be true, poor Emma will be found to have been at least as much sinned against as sinning. However, it is time the case were inquired into."

Lady Trevenean, desiring Mrs. Dalber to withdraw, sent by her a message to Emma, importing that her presence was required. The girl came trembling and ready to faint; indeed, so great was her agitation, that her lady was obliged to hand her to a seat, otherwise she

must have fallen. Having allowed her some time to control her feelings, Lady Trevenean then began a conversation of which it is unnecessary to enter into the details. It ended thus:—

"And so, young woman, I have been nurturing all this while an adder in my bosom; and you are, by your own confession, the guilty thing which others have long pronounced you, but which till now I never could believe! And now there is but one point more on which I must desire you to inform me. To which of these two young men, if to either, do you mean to lay the burthen of your worthlessness?"

"Oh, do not ask me, my lady!" was Emma's reply, while the salt drops chased one another over her cheeks. "I shall not live, I am sure, to bring a public accusation against either; and if I did, I owe too much to this family not to bear alone the consequences of my own guilt, without bringing disgrace upon my benefactors. I will never tell the world who is the father of my child, should I survive—which I am sure I will not—to bring it into the world."

"This is fine talking, Emma," said Lady Trevenean; "very romantic and very magnanimous! I wish only your romance and magnanimity had begun earlier, so as to keep you from ruining yourself, and occasioning so much

uneasiness to those to whom you owed a different return. But there is such a thing as a parish to be satisfied on that head; or you must reveal your secret before a bench of magistrates, if you persist in refusing to reveal it elsewhere."

"I shall not live, my lady, to reveal it to any one," replied the poor girl; "of that I am quite sure; and if I did, nothing but force would ever compel me to swear truly, and force itself cannot wring from me a falsehood."

"Well, young woman, I suppose you don't expect that I can permit you, after such a confession, to continue an inmate of this house? You are an orphan, I am aware, and well-nigh friendless; but you have an aunt in the village; you shall remove therefore this very afternoon, and I will send and prepare her for your reception."

So saying, Lady Trevenean waved the culprit out of the drawing-room, and proceeded immediately to seek her husband.

"You look as if you had some grave intelligence to communicate," said the baronet: "something has occurred to vex and agitate you."

"You judge rightly, Sir Charles; and I am much mistaken if it fail to agitate you also when I repeat it. Emma Freeman has just told me ——"

"What you need not tell me, my love, for I know it all already. It is an awkward business, to be sure; for Reginald is so young, that the story would tell against him for a year or two at all events were it to get wind. But Cyril is a noble fellow, and he shall not lose by his generosity, on that he may depend."

"Nay, now you puzzle me, Sir Charles," replied his lady. "My knowledge extends no further than the frailty of Emma; which gives me sufficient pain, I assure you, without considering who may be the partner of her folly. But your allusions to Reginald and Cyril are all mysteries to me: what is it that you mean?"

"Oh, since you don't know already, my love, I really cannot see why I should increase your uneasiness by informing you. Let it content you to learn that no blame will fall upon Reginald. Should a disclosure be made, which is just possible, he is not the party to be accused; though, if the truth were told, with him ought to lie both the blame and the odium."

"Now, pardon me, Sir Charles," answered the lady gravely, "if I confess that I doubt this. Reginald is an honourable boy, and would ——"

"Do just what other lads of his age are apt to do. However, be content; Reginald's name will never be mentioned: and the best method of keeping all names back is to hinder the brat

and its mother from becoming chargeable. Still, as I don't quite fancy having this sort of thing repeated, I believe the best plan will be to send the young men out of the way for a year or two, under the charge of the gentleman who has so long and so ably managed their education."

Lady Trevenean would have continued the conversation, being strong in the conviction of her son's innocence; but her husband seemed unwilling to listen. On the contrary, he requested that the subject might be dropped; and she was too obedient, as well as too sensible, not to take the hint.

"Is it possible, Cyril!" said Sir Charles to his nephew, the same day, as they walked forth together in the park just before dinner; "has Reginald been so weak as to give her a written promise of marriage?"

"It is too true, sir. He confessed the fact to me himself, and would give his right hand to purchase the document back again. But of this there is no hope. She is a very cunning girl:—so long as you deal liberally by her she will never produce the letter; but the moment you withdraw the allowance which I persuaded her to accept, the whole business will be carried into court, with all the effect which her youth and beauty can give it. My advice

to you therefore is, to allow her as much as will keep her and the child independently, and let the rumour go abroad that I am the culprit. Such a tale cannot injure me, for I am nobody; whereas your son's character must be preserved from the breath of suspicion, on your account, and on account of Lady Trevenean."

"My dear Cyril, I cannot sufficiently express to you how much you make me your debtor. Were it not for that awkward promise of marriage, the other scrape might be got over well enough; though certainly he is very young even for an affair of that kind. But it would blast him for ever were he to begin life under the shade of such a charge as she would doubtless bring against him. I believe, therefore, that I must take advantage of your kindness. Still, that the scandal may blow well over, I do think it will be prudent for you to quit home for a season; and as you have yet a great deal to learn, I propose sending you for a couple of winters to Glasgow, where the sciences are at least as well taught as in our English universities. I suppose you won't take long to get ready?"

"I can prepare in an hour," replied Cyril: "but neither Mr. Monro nor Reginald are quite so rapid in their motions, and therefore it may be well to consult them."

Sir Charles agreed to this proposition, and the uncle and nephew returned home. The dinner was not a pleasant one to any of the party; for my lady was fidgety and wretched, Sir Charles reserved, Reginald awkward and ill at ease, and Mr. Monro himself deficient in his accustomed plausibility. Cyril alone appeared to be in tolerable spirits, though even he dropped occasionally into a fit of abstraction.

"What can be the meaning of my father's increased coldness?" said Reginald, as he and his cousin withdrew to their study after tea: "and my mother seems strangely altered since morning."

"Upon my honour, Reginald, I cannot tell; but I fancy they are brooding over our projected trip to the North; from which both you and I will, I am sure, derive not only advantage, but enjoyment. How soon can you be prepared for a start?"

"By to-morrow morning if necessary, or to-night."

"I don't think we shall be required to set out in the dark," replied the other with a smile: "however, excuse me for half an hour; I must go and consult your father."

Cyril withdrew as he spoke; but, instead of returning to the saloon, passed quietly out to the park by a back-window. He hurried across

the open glade, and, diving into a little thicket, found a young woman waiting there to meet him.

"It is all over, Cyril; my shame is known everywhere. I am an exile from the house where my childhood was spent; and no one now looks on me except with disfavour. What shall I do? what will become of me?"

"Do as you have hitherto done, my sweet Emma; keep your own secret and mine, till the convenient moment comes when it will be safe to reveal it. I knew of your removal; I knew also that the thing was inevitable, for all my plans are frustrated: my uncle insists upon our quitting home for a year, and I cannot prevail upon him to alter his determination."

"Are you going also, Cyril? Am I then to be quite deserted? Oh, I cannot survive!"

"No, dear Emma, not deserted. I have made arrangements by which you will be provided with everything of which you may stand in need. An annuity is settled on you, more than sufficient for your maintenance either here or elsewhere; and the amount will be paid, wherever you may be, to your own appointed agent. Would to Heaven I could do more! But you know my total dependence on my uncle; and were I to do you that justice now,

which, sooner or later, you may depend on receiving, he would cast me off at once; and then where should we both be? Therefore be content, even as I am, to endure this temporary separation, with the firm assurance that it is but temporary, and that when we meet again nothing shall part us."

So far a conversation, which ended, as in such circumstances conversations usually do, in the consent of the weaker party to adopt whatever line has been suggested by the stronger. Emma returned to her aunt's, degraded, sorrowful, and desponding; while Cyril hastened back to begin those preparations which by noon on the following day were complete. The result of the whole may be stated in a few words:—On the day following that in which the above conferences were held, the young men with their tutor bid farewell to Morley Park, and in due time found themselves jogging along on the road to the North. They were all joyous as birds let loose from a cage, full of high hopes and bright anticipations. But they left one behind for whom a different destiny was reserved; the victim in some degree of her own imprudence,—in a degree far more effectual of another's villany. Emma Freeman shut herself up in her aunt's cottage, and there pined her life away.

Her constitution, naturally delicate, gave way under the pressure of shame and outraged feeling; and, long before the winter gave place to spring, she was carried, not yet a mother, to her grave.

CHAPTER III.

SCHEMES AND DEVICES.

THERE befel nothing to the travellers during their progress northward, nor yet a great deal throughout their sojourn in Glasgow, and their attendance on the learned professors there, of which it is necessary to give any account. The young men appeared, indeed, to relish their emancipation from the restrictions of home at least as much as youths in general are apt to do; and Mr. Monro was at once too prudent and too liberal to throw a damp upon their feelings. He shared, on the contrary, in all their amusements, if he did not positively promote them; dividing his attention pretty equally between them, but bestowing all his confidence on Cyril alone. For it may be stated once for all, that, owing to some cause or another, there had early sprung up between him and the young intruder an intimacy which every year seemed only to increase and confirm: yet it cannot perhaps be said that the one exercised any positive in-

fluence over the other. Both, on the contrary, seemed to act as if in obedience to the dictates of their own humours; that is to say, their bearing was that of persons who play into one another's hands, rather than of an artist and his weapon. Still nothing arose out of this, during their six months' residence in the "western capital of Scotland," so much at variance with the habits of young men in general as to demand particular notice. The case was different when summer came, and, instead of returning into Cornwall, it was announced to them from Morley, that they were not expected there for at least two years to come.

"What can my father mean by such an arrangement as this?" demanded Reginald, after he had read and re-read the letter which contained the baronet's decision. "For my part, I do not object to it: there is a great deal in this country well calculated to interest, and I anticipate both instruction and amusement from our exile. But, for the life of me, I cannot understand why the sentence should have gone forth."

"Nor can I throw any positive light on your darkness," replied Cyril, "except that your father is, as you know, an eccentric man, and probably wishes to see the improvements which you are going to make, brought, as it were,

per saltum to perfection. You left him a sickly and a shy lad; he desires to receive you back again a robust and well-bred man."

"And a man of science and learning," interposed the tutor, "richly imbued with all the lore which intense study and solitary reflection can alone bestow. Sir Charles judges, as he always does, wisely."

"And where or how is it proposed that we are to spend our vacations?" continued Reginald: "not, I trust, in this large workshop, of which I confess myself heartily sick already."

Reginald was not singular in his disinclination to pass the dog-days amid the smoke and filth of Glasgow. His cousin professed himself equally anxious to breathe a purer atmosphere; and Mr. Monro, as in duty bound, fell in pleasantly enough with the humours of his pupils. At his suggestion a cottage was hired by the margin of Loch Modeart, in Perthshire; and the little party adopting, as far as they were able, the habits of the natives, acquired day by day fresh vigour both of body and mind by constant exposure to the weather.

The change which his residence at Loch Modeart soon produced upon the health and bodily appearance of Reginald was such as to surprise, if it failed to delight, both his tutor and his cousin. Imperceptibly a conviction

had formed itself in the mind of the latter that Reginald's days were numbered; and as, in the event of his decease, he would himself become heir to the honours and property of the Treveneans, he had learned to anticipate the occurrence of such an event certainly not with dismay. From sundry hints, which in the course of their more confidential communications had escaped him, it appeared that a similar persuasion was entertained by Mr. Monro. Perhaps it was owing to that circumstance that he preferred conciliating the good opinion of his patron's nephew to that of his patron's son: for Mr. Monro was a man of far-seeking forethought, who needed but a glimpse of his own interests, and he never failed to pursue them steadily, no matter how remote. Be this, however, as it may, Cyril was not slow in observing that, in exact proportion to the improvements exhibited in Reginald's constitution, the attentions of his tutor became from day to day less exclusively devoted to himself. Now, though Cyril was, if the truth must be spoken, perfectly indifferent touching the friendship of Mr. Monro, he did not relish the kind of anticipations to which its palpable transference to his cousin gave rise; and, after long and painfully brooding over the matter, he determined to hold some serious conversation on the subject.

"Did you ever see such a change on a human being as on Reginald?" said he to Mr. Monro, as they sauntered together one evening by the lake's side; "he seems to have taken out a new lease of life; and the powers of his mind gain equal strength with those of his body."

"Reginald will live to inherit the honours of his family after all, I suspect," replied the pedagogue, casting a glance of peculiar expression towards his companion. "I must say that I did not expect so much at one time; but the Highland air has done wonders for him."

"Yet his constitution is naturally delicate in the extreme; and his prejudices, a sure sign of mental weakness, are insurmountable. I don't think he has any particular fancy for you, for example?"

"Probably not," replied Mr. Monro: "he has not had too much cause. If I had done as much for him as I have for you, it might have been otherwise."

"Nay, my dear friend," said Cyril; "never repent that you have honoured me with your especial regard. I hope that I have learned from you what it is to be grateful."

"Very likely: but the means, my dear boy—the means of showing one's gratitude are not always commensurate with the disposition; and

if Reginald live and prosper, as he now bids fair to do, in your case such means will not be very ample."

"But I really don't think, to speak seriously, that Reginald is so much strengthened after all," observed Cyril with an air of great indifference; "and if he were, he is no favourite, you know, with his father: the old boy won't leave him more than he can help."

"Oh, you think so, do you? Doubtless your sources of information are excellent. And yet there is one great reason why he should not be cut off, at least, even in his cousin's favour."

"What may that be, friend Monro?"

"That the estate is strictly entailed, friend Cyril. The ready cash, whatever may be its amount, will perhaps be disposed of as caprice or a sense of justice shall dictate; but the broad acres, including the right of presentation to the livings, and of appointment to the more lucrative and agreeable office of land-steward, goes, I apprehend, with them."

"So much the worse for you, Monro. Had *I* been heir-at-law, you should have had your choice either of the livings or the stewardship; or you might have obtained both, supposing the duties of the one to be compatible with those of the other."

"In that case, I wish you had been heir-at-law," replied the tutor with a smile: "but our wishing won't bring it about, I am afraid."

"It is monstrous hard," said Cyril, speaking in some sort to himself. "Had one's prospects not been so good in the beginning, one might have endured it; but when the whole stood, as it were, within one's grasp—only a single life, and that a bad one, being between—upon my soul it is enough to drive any man mad! I wish to God we had never visited Scotland!"

"Through whose fault was that, Cyril? If you had exercised a moderate control over your passions, poor Emma might have been spared, and we should have been at Morley still, caudling the young hopeful till he sank under it. And then to throw the scandal so cleverly upon his shoulders,—upon his who, I will venture to swear, never dreamed of such a thing,—I must say you deserve credit for that, as well as for the dexterity with which you have contrived to keep him up to this moment in ignorance of the renown that attaches to him."

"Well, if he never thought of such a thing at Morley," replied Cyril, while his eye suddenly lighted up as with some new idea, "may I fail in all my efforts to serve both you and myself, if he don't think of such a thing

here! Only conceive, our gentle and guileless cousin hath been smitten by the charms of pretty Bell Livingston, the old minister's grand-daughter. It would have done your heart good to see how well he played his new part both yesterday and the day before. Upon my soul though, I am half inclined to wish that he had kept clear of that vessel, with which I was myself strongly inclined to grapple."

"Why, you foolish fellow, if you again permit the humour of the moment to stand between you and the remotest prospect of your permanent interests, I give you up for ever. With the minister's grand-daughter you ought not, under any circumstances, to form such a *liaison* as you would alone think of forming; and should any consideration whatever tempt you to thwart the inclinations of your loving cousin, why then you are a greater fool than I take you to be. Let the thing go on. It cannot injure; it may prove of incalculable service to you, whatever may be its termination."

"Expound! expound! most learned pundit," replied Cyril, "for as yet thou speakest in riddles; and I do not possess the genius of Œdipus to read thy dark sayings!"

"Listen then, and consider, and understand; and, as a prelude to all further discussion, let us at the outset cast aside whatever of disguise

may have hitherto cloaked our intentions. I take it your first wish is to become owner of Morley, with the honours and emoluments thereto pertaining?"

"Most ably and most candidly announced," replied Cyril: "to thy first charge I plead guilty."

"And as there is but one bar in the way, your next wish is to remove it?"

"True again, O man of deep thought! but how?"

"Ay, there's the rub. A year ago, nature seemed willing to fall in with your inclinations, by nipping the delicate blossom ere it came to fruit; but now, if things be left to their legitimate course, the fruit will not only ripen, but sow itself again. I assume that you don't harbour any designs against your cousin's life?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed Cyril, starting, not in mockery, but in sincerity. "I certainly should be delighted to hear myself addressed as Sir Cyril Trevenean; but not for that homage, were it within my grasp to-morrow, would I defile my hands with poor Reginald's blood."

"What say you then, as the next best expedient, of promoting Reginald's marriage with Bell Livingston?"

"That he may become the father of a dozen sturdy Highlanders, each of whom

crosses my path of course, exactly as his sire did before him."

"No such thing, Cyril. You leap to conclusions most illogically; therefore give heed. You know that the baronet's affection for his heir-at-law is not of the most doting kind, and possibly you can account in some sort for the matter. You know also that the heir-at-law entertains for his papa much more of respect than of love,—if indeed that deserves to be called respect which amounts in point of fact to fear. Of course, the head of the house of Trevenean would never consent to the union of his only son with the grand-daughter of an obscure Scotch parson. But the happiness of the young couple themselves, we will assume, depends upon their union. The lover's relative is naturally much interested about him: he tries at first to reason him out of a foolish passion, but yields at last to the agony of his mind. What can be done? There is a private marriage; immediately after the celebration of which there comes a peremptory order of recall from Morley. The bride is induced to hold her tongue: the tutor is left in Scotland, with an adequate salary, to watch her, while the cousins return home. By-and-by Sir Charles wishes to see his son settled, and a match with some wealthy English lady is proposed. The

agitation caused by the pressing of that point deeply affects the health of the young husband, and he pines and dies; or else his weakness is worked upon, and he perpetrates bigamy. Do you take?"

"Perfectly, most excellent Mentor; and go with and approve every suggestion which thou hast uttered. By what strange caprice of fortune is it, that talents like thine, so well calculated for the meridian of courts and cabinets, should be wasted on the lowly and irksome occupation of a bear-leader? What would not an excellent monarch give, had he at his disposal, either for foreign or domestic intrigue, such a counsellor as thou art? However, seeing that higher game is not yielded to thy talons, the minister's grand-daughter and the heir of Morley must find them employment, while thy pupil in all things follows out the hints which thou hast given. The idea is brilliant in the extreme!"

"Now a truce with heroics, Cyril," replied the tutor, stopping and looking him full in the face. "The device which I have proposed is one that cannot be carried into effect without patience, perseverance, the exercise of much discretion, unbounded confidence on your part towards the person whom you may condescend to trust, and the assurance that to embark in so ha-

zardous an enterprise shall be rendered worth his while. I know you to be a youth of more than ordinary quickness, and I give you credit for at least as much of wisdom as belongs to most men of maturer years. But have you resolution to go through with such an affair, to whatever risks it may expose you? for I need not add, that to withdraw from it after the first step shall have been taken, will be ruin."

"I did flatter myself," replied Cyril firmly, "that after living with me so many years on terms of the closest intimacy, you might have discovered that my perseverance and discretion are at least equal to my quickness. I tell you, that ever since the hateful truth was forced upon my conviction, that Reginald was likely to outgrow his boyish weakness, the necessity of doing something has been continually present with me—ay, even in my dreams. I have thought of every imaginable scheme, short only of that for which I am not yet sufficiently depraved. Nay, I do not conceal from you that even that measure itself has from time to time passed across my fancy, though I have invariably driven it away again with horror. You may believe, therefore, that being put in possession, as I now am, of the outlines of a scheme that bears upon its surface every mark of feasibility, I am not likely to shrink, let come what

may, from filling up its details and acting upon them. Give me your cordial assistance; and if success attend our efforts, you shall need but to specify your own reward. To be sure, we may fail; and if so, you can easily be kept out of view, and shall be so kept, as far at least as I am concerned. But we shall play for a high game; and if we win it, why then our triumph will be in proportion to the amount of difficulties overcome. Therefore, do not doubt either my courage or my caution. I will go with you into the matter with heart and soul, and I pledge myself that the same proceedings which make my fortune shall make yours also."

"I take you at your word, Cyril," replied the tutor: "that is to say, I *will* take your written agreement to secure to me an annuity of five hundred a year; which, when you come into possession of Morley Park, you shall redeem at ten thousand pounds. Are you content?"

"I have only one objection," said Cyril, grasping the extended hand of his confederate; "which is, that you are too moderate in your demands. When I come into possession of Morley Park, I shall be bound to consider myself your debtor to a much larger amount than ten thousand pounds."

"As much more as you please," answered the tutor, passing his arm through that of

Cyril, and smiling, as they walked homewards; "but as I do not wish to burthen a friend's estate too much, I shall be quite satisfied with the promissory note for ten thousand."

The friends reached their lodging just as the clock was striking ten, and were soon afterwards joined by Reginald. A slight supper, accompanied with a good deal of *badinage*, closed in the occupations of the day; and they retired, each to ponder over again upon his own pillow the thoughts which had chiefly occupied his mind during the day.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INTRODUCTION.

In the hints which Cyril has been described as throwing out relative to the state of his cousin's affections, no very material error had been committed. Reginald was indeed deeply enamoured of a simple Highland girl, of whom he knew no more than he had been enabled to gather from an accidental introduction into her grandfather's family, when free and unrestricted intercourse which the manners of the country sanction among acquaintances of even a few days' standing gave him an opportunity to collect but little. The circumstances of the case were these.

Ever since their arrival among the mountains of Perthshire, Reginald Trevenean seemed to have changed his nature. He became, instead of the delicate stayer at home, the most adventurous and toil-enduring member of the party; one who went abroad before sunrise with his fishing-rod or his gun, and not unfrequently

returned only after the moon was in mid-heaven. Among other pursuits to which he especially addicted himself was deer-stalking. The opportunity of tracking that noble animal occurred indeed about Loch Moideart side but rarely: for though there are more forests than one within the compass of forty miles, the care with which the animal is now looked after and preserved cuts off almost all his chances from the unprivileged stalker. Still a buck, either scared away after sustaining an unequal combat with a rival, or wounded perhaps, and so driven to break loose from the wonted haunts of the herd, would occasionally make his appearance on Benlars side; and as surely as this occurred, Reginald, who soon made friends with the most experienced poachers about the place, obtained information. Away he posted on all such occasions rifle in hand, taking his informant for the most part as his guide; and if he did not invariably return loaded with red-deer venison, he never failed to exercise in quest of it both the skill and the patience of an expert hunter. Cautiously he planted himself to leeward of the pass in which the animal had last been seen, and slow and tortuous were his movements if by chance he caught a glimpse of its noble antlers uprising like the branches of a tree from behind some grey rock on the brow of the corry.

Nor when it came to the final experiment was Reginald found wanting, provided any approach to what the sportsman would term a fair chance were afforded. If by dragging himself on his belly from stone to stone he contrived to bring his rifle to the level—in other words, if he brought the beast within a hundred or a hundred and fifty paces—it rarely happened that he missed his mark; so true was his aim in ball-firing — an accomplishment which till now he had never practised, but to which the consciousness that he did excel in it produced, as it is apt to do, a great partiality.

Reginald was returning one day late in the autumn from an excursion of the sort somewhat jaded with toil, when, just as he was about to descend into the glen at the further extremity of which his temporary abode lay, he found himself thrown into a situation requiring almost more of decision than belonged to his naturally gentle and timid disposition. He saw beneath him two persons, a male and a female, the former evidently of an extreme old age, the latter in the first dawning of womanhood, endeavouring, as it seemed vainly, to escape from a ferocious bull that was pawing the ground and advancing upon them. The plateau on which they were moving was a bare open hollow, hemmed in on one hand by the

mountain down the side of which Reginald had just passed; on the other by a rapid river, of which the channel was full of huge stones. From the motions of the pair, it was quite evident that they knew and rightly estimated the amount of their danger. The old man's arm was round the girl's waist, and he threw from time to time an anxious glance back towards the monster from which he desired to shield her; while the girl, manifestly more concerned for him than for herself, seemed to be supporting his steps, and so far hastening his progress. But the race, if such it may be termed, was quite unequal: the bull gained upon them continually, even though he did not quicken his pace beyond a long trot; till, having arrived within a few yards of the spot where in despair they had to face him, he halted, lashed his sides with his tail, and seemed on the eve of attacking them.

Scarcely conscious of what he was about to do, Reginald brought his rifle to the present. A single instant sufficed to make him sure of his aim. He pulled the trigger, and the animal rolled upon the ground with a ball in his brain.

Reginald's first glance was naturally directed towards the victim of his skill; his next turned upon the persons whom he had saved, and on whom so sudden a revulsion from despair to its

opposite had produced its customary effect. The girl had fallen to the ground; and the old man, sitting down, was supporting her head upon his knees, and striving with palsied hands to undo the strings of her bonnet, so as to admit a free current of air to her face. In an instant Reginald's self-command returned. He ran towards the little group; said a word or two of encouragement to the old man; passed rapidly on to the river, and returned with his drinking-cup full of water, and applying it partly to the girl's lips, partly to her hands and forehead, had the satisfaction speedily to observe the colour return into her cheeks. By-and-by she drew a long breath, and, opening her eyes, sat up, eagerly demanding whether her grandfather were safe, and where he was.

"I am here, safe and sound, dear child," replied the old man, "thanks to this gallant young gentleman who has saved us both; or rather, thanks to that Providence which sent him in our hour of need to stand between us and destruction. I am sure, sir," continued he, turning to Reginald, "you have laid me under an obligation of which no words can express the amount. You have preserved not only my life, but that of my dear child; and may God bless you for it, for I can offer no recompense!"

"I have done nothing, sir, to deserve either

recompense or thanks," replied Reginald modestly. "It was the act of a moment—the result of mere impulse, such as any one must have obeyed in my circumstances; and very glad am I that it succeeded so well, both for your sake and my own."

"It was much more, young gentleman," answered the old man; "it was a special interference of Providence, and, as such, it behoves us, in whose favour it befel, to return our first thanks to Heaven. But we should ill deserve the continued protection of the Power which shielded us now, were we to fail of gratitude to you, who were at least its instrument. I trust you will do us the favour to accompany us home."

Reginald had fixed his gaze, while the old man was speaking, upon the countenance of his companion, who seemed as yet to have only partially recovered from her terror; and the glance sufficed to assure him that he had never beheld a creature more lovely. Her age could not exceed sixteen or seventeen at the most. A profusion of dark brown hair, let loose from the restraint of the head-dress, streamed in rich masses over her shoulders. Her eyes, large, dark, and full of intelligence, expressed, when those of Reginald met them, much more than it would have been in the power of any com-

bination of words to communicate. Naturally pale, fear had lent a tinge to her cheek which contrasted exquisitely with the clear and alabaster hue of her forehead; and when the lips parted as if in an effort to speak, two rows of teeth were displayed to which the brightest pearl were impure. Nor was her form at variance with the gentle and truly feminine cast of that beautiful countenance. Somewhat below the middle stature, every limb appeared to be moulded in the most perfect symmetry, so as to realize the brightest dream that poet ever encouraged while seeking to describe a wood-nymph, or fay, or gentle spirit of the fountain. Reginald gazed upon the fair creature with an earnestness of which nothing but the peculiarity of their circumstances could have rendered her unobservant, and drank in, even at first sight, whole draughts of a passion which, with minds like his, never brooks control.

Had there been no other motive to guide him, Reginald felt that it would have been uncivil to decline the old man's invitation: as the case stood, he closed with it greedily. Nor was his arm useless as a support either to the patriarch or his grandchild. The weight of eighty winters pressed, as the old man said, heavily upon his shoulders; and the girl still tottered in her gait from excess of agitation. As

they proceeded onwards, however, both the one and the other so far recovered as to make their young protector aware of their condition and circumstances. He, it appeared, was the minister of the parish, of which he had been the incumbent upwards of fifty years: she was all that remained to represent a family which had consisted at one period of six sons and three daughters. "But they all died young," continued Mr. Livingston: "they were all, except one, taken away before the world had time to corrupt them. I thought, when blow after blow fell, that Heaven dealt too hardly with me. First one and then another left me just as youth was beginning to ripen into manhood; and, worst of all, the partner of my joys and sorrows died also. It was then my grief assumed, God forgive me! the language of complaint. But now I see things in their true light: they have but gone before me, leaving only this dear child to close the eyes of her grandfather, after she should have cheered and supported, as she has done, his last days. You will find, therefore, but a thinly peopled manse, with little in or about it to lead you back again, unless it be the gratitude of its inmates."

Reginald could reply only by repeating his assurances that he neither deserved nor desired so much as the thanks of those whom it had been

his good fortune to serve. They therefore continued their course, discovering every moment fresh reason to be pleased with one another: for the minister, though loquacious, was full of knowledge and right feeling; and Reginald won upon him as much by his modesty as his decision. With respect to Isabel, she, as may be imagined, took little share in the conversation: yet when she did speak, there was a music in her voice which sank into the listener's soul; while her eyes beamed upon him with an expression so cordial, so grateful, so confiding, that Reginald felt as if he were already on a footing towards her of the most unrestricted friendship.

Thus it was throughout a half-hour's walk, the completion of which brought them in view of the minister's dwelling,—than which, Reginald acknowledged, not without reason, that he had never beheld anything so beautiful. It stood at the base of a low green hill, easy of ascent, and feathered with trees to the summit; behind which, though cut off from it by a vale of perhaps a quarter of a mile in width, uprose a rugged and ponderous mass of granite. From the front windows of the manse, again, the eye looked out upon the whole length of the lake. There it lay, with its islands, its promontories, and bays, all of them thickly wooded, and all enclosed with an amphi-

theatre of mountains, piled one upon another in the most extraordinary combinations of form imaginable. It chanced, moreover, that just as the scene opened upon them, the sun, which had been drawing gradually towards the west, disappeared beneath the far-off mountains; and as his beams shot upwards, tinging the sky with gold, and shedding over rock, and tree, and water, tints which art has never yet been able to imitate, Reginald, who really had a taste for the sublime in nature, gazed round him in mute astonishment.

"It is a glorious scene!" exclaimed the old man, while his eye lighted up with some of the enthusiasm which had doubtless belonged to him in youth. "You cannot wonder if we, who have lived all our days amid such objects as these, should acquire an attachment to the land of our birth, which you Southerns are apt to deride as misplaced."

"I should very much wonder if the case were otherwise," replied Reginald. "Were this my native country, no consideration on earth would ever induce me to leave it."

"And yet the feeling is fast dying away among us," observed Isabel. "The attachments of which my grandpapa speaks appear to be retained only by those of his own standing; for the young quit their native valleys

without a sigh, and seldom think of revisiting them."

"There are causes for that in most instances, Bel," said the minister, "the reverse of flattering to the Highland gentry. The spirit of improvement has made its way into this remote corner of the empire even as it has done elsewhere, and produces its customary effects. Old tenants, ejected from the sheelings in which their forefathers lived from generation to generation, cannot easily reconcile themselves to a change of residence unless it be complete. We shall have to seek in North America, by-and-by, all that may remain both of our language and our customs."

"And something, also, we owe to your country," added Isabel, addressing herself to Reginald. "You are too wealthy, too liberal. You corrupt our primitive tastes by scattering your gold among us, and, creating new and artificial wants, render us dissatisfied with our condition."

"You would not have us accept the services of men so willing as your hardy peasants without remuneration?" demanded Reginald with a smile.

"That is as the case may be," replied Isabel. "Our peasantry used to be repaid for every act of kindness by the consciousness that they did

right in performing it; but you are fast teaching them to sell their good qualities—to make civility itself an article of barter."

"Yet you, who blame us for giving the voluntary guide a few shillings, seem determined to treat me, a fortunate stranger, as if I had rendered you essentially my debtor."

"Ah, the cases are different," answered Isabel, while a blush tinged her cheek. "He who goes a mile out of his way to direct the steps of a stranger deserves thanks, but no more: he who has preserved life cannot be rewarded according to his merits."

"Besides," continued the old man, "we are selfish in all this display of gratitude. We lead a lonely life here, and desire to cultivate the acquaintance of a young gentleman whose acquirements appear to be in keeping with his modesty and courage. So that upon us, not upon you, the obligation is conferred, which we shall not, I trust, be hindered from acknowledging."

They were by this time arrived at the little swing gate which, intersecting a rustic fence, conducted into the minister's garden; an enclosure which, sloping down from the front of the manse, abutted upon the road, as that again touched the waters of the lake. They passed along the narrow gravel-walk, bordered

on each side by flowers and flowering shrubs, and were admitted within the portals of a substantial stone house by a bare-headed, barefooted servant girl, whose costume and general appearance contrasted unpleasantly with the air of comfort and neatness that reigned around, though to the eye of Reginald alone such contrast seemed to be visible. But if the slovenly attire of the handmaiden struck him as out of character in such a family, Reginald was scarcely less startled by the manner and appearance of the lady whom he found sitting beside the window of the parlour into which he was ushered, and to whom Mr. Livingston introduced him as to his sister-in-law. Nor, to say the truth, was Miss Mysie Macwhapple a sort of personage whom it would have been easy to overlook.

Miss Mysie Macwhapple was one of that class of ladies of which some remains are yet to be found north of the Tweed, but which promises in half a century or thereabouts to become altogether extinct. Well-born, very indifferently educated, and, above all, left by the early death of her parents totally destitute, Mysie had subsisted from eighteen to thirty-five on the bounty of remote connexions, passing during nine months of the year as a visiter from house to house on in-

vitations which were much more frequently given as a matter of duty than as an indulgence of inclination. Her home all this while was a single apartment in a country town of the Lowlands; to enable her to pay the rent of which, as well as to provide food and fuel while inhabiting it, she embroidered muslin, made gentlemen's shirts and children's dresses, and accepted small annual donations from such as were willing to bestow them. Strange to say, however, amid all this dependence and poverty, Miss Mysie was not only cheerful, but self-satisfied. In the consciousness that she was descended from one of the oldest families in the Highlands, she found ample sources of consolation amid all her difficulties; nay, she positively looked down upon many of those by whose bounty she lived, as upon beings of an inferior order. Hence, when her elder sister, like herself portionless, consented to become the wife of Mr. Livingston, Mysie went about from place to place deploring the occurrence, and blaming the delinquent as one who, from base and mercenary motives, had brought disgrace upon the best blood in all Scotland. "Wha wud hae thought of such a thing, Mrs. Morrison?" such was the epithalamium which she poured forth into the ear of a cousin. "Your marriage was bad enough;

for, tak away his yestate, and what is Mr. Morrison that he should hae sought the hand of a daughter of the house of Ivan Dhu? But young Livingston, forby that he 's a Presbyterian body, Lord have a care o' me! he's the son of a shepherd on the lands of Glenstrae. I 'm sure I 'll never be able to haud up my head again in gude society!"

Time passed, however, and as the bride continued to represent her situation as one for which she had every cause to be thankful, Miss Mysie, after the defection of more than one of her more aristocratic supporters, was at last induced to honour the manse with a visit. There everything was done to render her life agreeable, and even her pride gave way before the melting influence of kindness. The consequence was, that when, in obedience to his wife's dying wishes, Mr. Livingston, now a widower, invited Mysie to take up her abode with him, she yielded, though not without a show of reluctance, to enter upon the charge of his household. Nor, to do her justice, was she ever unmindful of her duties, as far as the powers of her mind enabled her to trace them out. She nursed his delicate children till, one by one, they pined and died. She reconciled the minister to a rash marriage which his eldest son, when yet a youth at college, had contracted;

and took home little Isabel at her father's demise, so that she might be brought up at a distance from her disreputable mother. In one word, Miss Mysie's faults were all those of the understanding, — her excellences those of the heart: so that for fifteen years in which she superintended the domestic arrangements of Moideart manse, she contributed not a little to the well-being of its inmates.

CHAPTER V.

A MANSE.

"THIS, sister, is——" said Mr. Livingston; and he paused, as if at a loss, yet unwilling to violate the law of good breeding, which prevents the Highlander from asking the name of a guest.

"My name is Trevenean,—Reginald Trevenean," interrupted Reginald, perfectly unacquainted with the real cause of the old man's embarrassment, though anxious to remove it. "I am the only son of Sir Charles Trevenean, of Morley Park in Cornwall; and, with my cousin and tutor, have come to Scotland for the purpose of completing my education."

"Well, sister," continued the old man, "this is Mr. Reginald Trevenean, to whose courage and address you owe it that either Bell or I stand here to introduce him."

"I'm very glad to see Mr. Trevenean," replied the lady, raising her meagre person from the seat which she had hitherto occupied, and

courtesying in a manner which was clearly intended to impress the young man with a due conviction of her dignity,—"the son of Sir Charles Tranean—"

"Trevenean, my dear,—Trevenean," said the minister quickly.

"Weel, weel, Maister Livingston, be it Trevenean or Tranean, it's a' ane to me: I'm very glad to see him; for a right-down English gentleman's fit company for a Macwhapple; though your mongrel Lowland bodies, I canna abide them ava. But what was that ye were saying about yoursel' and Bell there?"

"That the young gentleman before you saved both our lives not an hour ago."

"Lord have a care o' me!" cried Miss Mysie, descending at once from her stilts; "how did he manage that?"

Mr. Livingston then related what had occurred, in spite of repeated attempts on Reginald's part to interrupt him; and Mysie equally bore down his reluctance to hear his own praise sounded, by the volubility of her exclamations.

"Did ever onybody hear o' the like o' that? to let wild bulls gang up and doun, rinnin' at honest folk this gate! It was a' God's mercy, Mr. Trevenean, that sent ye there. Od! but ye maun be a grand shot! I 'm thinking your

father maun hae deer in his park, just as the Macwhapples used to have before the weary times of the Fifteen and Forty-five. And he killed it dead? Weel, I care na wha aucht it, — he 's weel saired to get sic a rapagious beast pitten out o' the way. I'm sure the hale parish will thank ye, Maister Trevenean; for our minister 's weel liket, though I say it that sudna say it. And yet I'm no kin to him neither. My sister, puir thing! didna think it beneath her to marry a worthy man, though he didna just happen to be come of as gude a family as her ain; and so, you see, I've consented to take her place now she's gane, and to manage his household for him, honest man! Chirsty, I 'm saying, Chirsty, bring ben the supper. Ye'll no' gang awa' the nicht, Maister Trevenean? We'll put on a pair o' clean sheets on the white bed in a moment; and the herd-laddy can rin doun, if ye wish, and lat them know at Port Montrosh that you 're no' comin' hame. Ye'll just bide where ye are a' nicht."

Reginald, however, by what motive actuated it might be hard to determine, persisted in refusing to avail himself of the hospitality of Miss Mysie: indeed he would not even stay to partake of the meal which all united in pressing upon him, but, after a few moments' delay, took his leave. He left behind him, as may be

imagined, an impression of the most favourable kind; and he retired to his own apartment, without communicating either to Cyril or Mr. Monro that any adventure apart from common had befallen him that day.

Reginald had promised to call at the manse on the following morning; and it will readily be imagined that he did not forget his promise. His manner, indeed, during breakfast, which was abstracted, reserved, and moody, scarce passed unnoticed by his companions; and the meal was hardly finished, ere he took up his rod and basket, and, under the pretence of fishing, made for the head of the loch.

It was not customary, under the then circumstances of their position, for one of the party to interfere with the private arrangements of the other, inasmuch as the summer months were regarded by all as a season of absolute relaxation; and neither Mr. Monro nor Cyril entertaining the slightest taste for angling, Reginald was left to pursue his own humours. On, therefore, he bounded, as soon as he had turned the corner of the glen, with a step which became more and more elastic in proportion as the space between him and the manse was narrowed; while his thoughts ran before him so rapidly—so eagerly, as to excite something like astonishment even in himself.

"Why should I be so anxious to see these worthy people again?" said he. "To be sure, the minister is a truly venerable man, and Miss Mysie might go upon the stage to-morrow in her own proper person; and as to Bell, certainly she is a pretty girl—a very pretty girl, and so natural and so single-minded! Nay, I can't tell what it is that draws me thither, but I do find that the acquaintance is likely to be an agreeable one." Yet he pursued his way as cheerfully as if the reasons of the case had been perfectly plain to his own understanding, and regretted only that so much time should be wasted in effecting its accomplishment.

When a sudden bend in the hill placed him all at once in front of the minister's garden, Reginald ascertained by the surest of all proofs that this visit was not unexpected. Bell Livingston, with a spade or hoe in her hand, was leaning over the little rustic gate as if to rest after the labour of weeding, while her gaze was directed steadily towards the point at which a visiter from Port Montrosh might be expected to present himself. Nor had Reginald time to salute her by pulling off his bonnet, ere she pushed the gate open, and then, as if doubtful of the propriety of such an act, suddenly stopped short, while the blood mantled to her cheeks and forehead.

"You see how glad I am to take advantage of your hospitality, Miss Livingston," said Reginald, advancing towards her and extending his hand. "I told you last night that I should soon break in upon you again, though you probably did not anticipate so speedy a fulfilment of the threat. But you must blame your own kindness for this intrusion."

"We may thank our good genius for the favour, you mean," replied Bell gaily. "I assure you we have talked of nothing but yourself ever since you left us; and we are all anxious to welcome you back again, for what we all hope may prove a longer visit."

"If I were to consult only my own wishes," replied Reginald, "the visit would be long enough; but there are other considerations to be attended to — such as your grandfather's leisure, your aunt's convenience, and ——"

"And what more?" said Bell archly: "my patience perhaps? Very well, so let it be. In the mean while, I have the pleasure to assure you that my grandfather desires nothing so much as to have his leisure interrupted by your company; and that my aunt has at least a dozen stories of the Macwhapples, while yet they were in the pride of their might, which she is dying to communicate to some patient and unitiated listener like yourself."

"And from you, Miss Livingston," demanded Reginald in the same lively tone,—"what mark of especial favour am I to receive from you?"

"Oh, you shall hold my skein of silk while I wind it; or read aloud to me while I sew or paint; or, it may be, I may task you to transplant a flower or two, or to dig up some of the weeds which cruelly overrun these borders. Don't flatter yourself that you are going to escape labour even from my hands. However, here comes grandpapa, who, if I mistake not, will be the first to lay upon you a command which you must not think of disobeying for your life."

The minister came up as his grand-daughter spoke, having observed from the window of his little study the arrival of the visiter, and was not slow in pressing Reginald to become his guest at least for a few days,—just, as the good man expressed it, that he might be able to describe to his friends in the South how the clergy of the Church of Scotland really lived. Neither was Reginald prepared on this occasion, as he had been the night previously, to withstand so powerful a temptation. He said something about a disinclination to separate from his friends at Port Montrosh, and about the neglect of which he had been guilty in leaving them ignorant of the agreeable acquaintance which he had formed, as well as the necessity imposed

upon him of making some use, even of the summer, in prosecuting studies in which he was sadly deficient. But all these difficulties the minister managed to clear away. Nothing could be more easy than to bring his friends to the manse; and as to his studies, why he might devote to these just as many hours in each day as should be agreeable to himself, without running the smallest risk of interruption. "For I generally spend my mornings alone," continued the old man, "and my worthy housekeeper has her domestic matters to arrange; and Bell here shall be put under articles not to pester you with her chatter till the period of labour is done. And as to fishing, depend upon it there is no place in the loch equal to that bay just in front of the garden; and in the river that falls in beyond the promontory yonder you are sure to have sport when you cannot find it elsewhere."

What could a youth of eighteen, acted upon by so many and such cogent arguments, offer in refutation of them? Reginald yielded with a good grace, and a boy being despatched to Port Montrosh for such changes of apparel as he was likely to require, he consented to become an inmate of the manse for one week.

It would be as little interesting, as it would of course be uncalled for, were I to detail

at length either the events that occurred during the progress of these seven happy days, or the consequence to which they eventually led. When two young persons such as Reginald Trevenean and Isabel Livingston are thrown together by circumstances so peculiar as those of which some account has been given, each sees in the other more than the imagination had ever ventured to portray of beautiful in person and attractive in manners. When the mornings are spent in wandering side by side amid scenery like that which surrounds Loch Moideart; the evenings, in giving and receiving mutual delight by the interchange of lively conversation, by reading, by music, or sometimes by moonlight rambles along the margin of a quiet lake;—to hinder the growth between them of feelings such as put both peace of mind and health of body in hazard, requires a miracle which, with all possible reverence be it spoken, it comes not within the ordinary range of providential interferences to perform. To be sure, the prudent and the calculating are apt in such a case to throw as many impediments as possible in the way of so perilous an intimacy. The worldly parent or guardian is careful that on neither side shall the affections be so deeply engaged as to hinder a quiet disruption of the tie at any given moment. But

with the minister of Moideart there was little or no knowledge of the world, giving to that phrase the meaning which it usually receives; in other words, there was no disposition to watch events as they occurred with a microscopic eye, or to draw from them inferences not strictly within the range of direct and palpable consequences. The good old minister neither saw danger to his grandchild's happiness in the intimacy which she had formed, nor would have listened for a moment to the suggestion had such been made to him; while aunt Mysie either regarded the whole affair as what she was pleased to term "calf love," or consoled herself with the reflection that, "suld it tak a mair serious turn, why then a young lady come o' the house o' Macwhapple was a match for ony lord's son in the hale kingdom, lat a be a baronet." Thus were the young people left, unchecked and unawed, to indulge to their utmost limit feelings of mutual admiration and delight, which, fostered and nourished on both sides by the discovery of a thousand similarities in taste and temper, ripened within the space of a few short days into passion. Long before the week came to an end, Reginald and Isabel lived only for one another; and though no verbal communication of the fact had as yet passed between them, each knew that

the happiness or misery of the other was in his or her keeping.

There is a gentleness and timidity in our first true love, which, as it never comes but once, so would it be difficult, if not impossible, to bring back the recollection of what it was, even to those who may have long ago experienced it. The worldling has never felt, and the worldling cannot therefore comprehend it. But neither Reginald nor Isabel were, in any sense of the term, worldlings. Amid all their lonely walks, through the shady grove by day, by the margin of the cool lake at night, there had not passed between them aught of which the most rigid observer could have said with truth that it implied the existence of any other sentiments than those of the most disinterested friendship. Happy they were, perfectly happy, in one another's society; contented with the present, seldom looking forward to the future, and talking over the past only when the occurrence of some natural object chanced to bring back the memory of what might have occurred between them on a previous day. Yet was there on the spirits of both a pressure, a gentle pressure, which caused them from time to time to drop into silence—the silence of busy thought, languid, soft, soothing, exquisitely delicious, which brought with it sensations that defy the power of language to de-

scribe, and out of which to be awakened too rudely is to be brought down from heaven to earth. More especially was this the case when, after strolling arm in arm till weariness overtook them, they sat down upon a tall rock that overhung the lake, and watched, amid the silence that everywhere prevailed, the moonbeams break into long lines of light over the surface of the water. For a while no words escaped them there; indeed their whole souls appeared to be engrossed by the splendour of the night-scene, and the ideas to which it gave rise. For over the clear surface of the lake the mountains were reflected as in a mirror, but slightly ruffled by the occasional leaping of the trout; while the foliage, if it stirred at all, produced only that gentle murmur which tends to promote rather than interrupt the train of thought which such a landscape, seen at such an hour and under such circumstances, never fails to bring into play.

"What a country is yours, Isabel!" Reginald at last broke silence by exclaiming. "How magnificent the scene on which we are gazing now! No wonder that enthusiasm should become a portion of your national character. Had it been my good fortune to be born among these mountains, my last breath would have been rendered up where my first was drawn,—

I should have lived and died without ever seeking to go beyond them."

"You would have done exactly as others do, Mr. Trevenean," replied Isabel in a low tone; "mixed with society as a point of duty, given yourself up to the guidance of ambition or the thirst of renown, or an indulgence of taste cast behind you as childish the dreams of early youth, and thought only of your native Highlands when sickness or sorrow bowed you down. It is not so with us: we are creatures of circumstances, beings over whom the outward forms of Nature exercise a control such as you cannot understand. Our feelings, our affections are all so constituted, that if there be no living objects to engross them, they concentrate upon the mountain or the flood. There is little of enthusiasm connected with place or country, I suspect, except among women."

"Then there is a power in association, Isabel of which, till experience brings us acquainted with it, we know not the force. Why should I, for example, the native of rich and level England, become thus strangely enamoured of your rocks and streams?"

"I cannot tell," answered Isabel sighing; "unless it be that you have passed your time agreeably among them, and know that you must by-and-by quit them for ever."

"Not for ever, Isabel," cried Reginald tenderly,—"not for ever. Let Fortune do with me what she will, I can never cease to look back upon the happy days I have spent here, or to wish that I could live them over again. And as I shall one day be master of my own time and movements, why should I despair at least of renewing them."

"Because new ties will bind you down, new habits cast their chain around you;—because you have a part to act in the busy world with which visions of Loch Moideart must not interfere;—because, when you go hence, it will be to mix with the wealthy and the great, to become one of a mighty crowd of beings that jostle and push one against another. Oh no, Mr. Trevenean; the enthusiasm of which you speak may be strongly felt now, but it will die out and be forgotten ere a twelvemonth and a day pass over;—and that, you know, is the established time of trial for the constancy of all knights and damsels that bind themselves by a vow."

"Dear Isabel, how can this be? Do you imagine that I can ever forget the manse, the kind good old minister, or his gentle granddaughter, my companion in so many sweet walks?"

"I do not know, Mr. Treven——"

"Not Mr. Trevenean, Isabel; Reginald—Reginald; otherwise you must be Miss Livingston."

"Well then, Reginald—dear Reginald if you will,—I do not know whether you will forget us, but I do know that we never can forget you. How, indeed, should we? Are we not your debtors for life itself? and for—nay, nay, I scarce know what I would say, except that I wish we were brother and sister."

"We may love one another as if we were, Isabel—we may live for one another as if that sweet tie bound us together. And then surely you will not persist in believing that I can be without a motive to seek Loch Moideart again? However, thank God, there is at least one more summer before us. In winter we return only to Glasgow; and when the leaf is on the tree again, how gladly will I resume my old habits! provided you continue to encourage me in them."

"I, Reginald! I will count the very hours till you return.—But the night wears apace; we had best go home now."

They rose as she said this, and retracing their steps to the manse, joined the rest of the family at prayers, in a frame of mind somewhat more pensive perhaps, but not less tranquil, than usual.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFESSIONS.

"You have stolen a march upon us, Reginald," said Cyril, gaily, to his cousin, when the latter rejoined the little circle at Port Montrosh the day after his moonlight walk with Isabel. "What have we done that we should be excluded from the agreeable society at the manse? Upon my honour, you are become a dangerous man. May I venture to ask whether the aunt or the niece is the especial object of attention?"

"Neither the one nor the other, Cyril," replied Reginald with a forced smile. "Accident enabled me to do these worthy people a service, for which they are so kind as to persuade themselves that they are bound to be grateful; and so they have forced upon me hospitality which, however highly I may value it, I do not feel that I have done anything to merit."

"He is as modest as he is captivating," cried Cyril jocosely; "your true Paladin, who first

slays the dragon and delivers the damsel, and then vows that the honour of the feat is due to her beauty, not to his prowess. But, come now, give us a full and particular account of the minister and his household."

"Story! God bless you, I have none to tell, sir!" answered Reginald. "The minister seems to me to come as near the *beau ideal* of what a Christian pastor ought to be, as it is possible for flesh and blood to do; and his housekeeper, though odd, is kindness itself. As to the young lady, you shall judge of her for yourself whenever you give me the opportunity of introducing you to her acquaintance."

"But won't that interfere with your prior claim, good coz.?"

"If you will tell me in what my priority of claim consists, then I may be able to say. At present I am quite in the dark."

"Well, we can't acquit you of having done your best to preoccupy the ground, at all events. 'Pon my life, you are a monstrous sly fellow!"

"Not a bit, not a bit," answered Reginald, laughing. "Somewhat selfish I may have been, in seeking to engross, even for a time, all the enjoyment to myself; but your ground of complaint shall be removed, provided you consent to go with me to-morrow, where I am

commissioned to intimate that your company is expected."

"And our friend the Dominie?"

"Oh, he will be quite welcome also. You shall both go under the shadow of my wing; and I will be surety for your good behaviour till you each make out a case of confidence in his own favour."

And they did go on the morrow, and were as kindly received as Reginald had taught them to expect; the fact that they came upon his introduction being sufficient to secure for them the welcome of old acquaintance. For hospitality was yet practised in Scotland to a very large extent even towards entire strangers; who ceased at once to be accounted such, provided their manners and conversation at all fell in with the established usages of the families into whose bosom they gained admittance.

It was the month of August when the acquaintance between Reginald and Isabel began. The leaf was green, and the foliage thick and luxuriant, when they first gazed together by moonlight over the waters of Loch Moideart; the early frosts of October had browned the one and attenuated the other when they again found themselves seated on the same smooth rock. It was on the night preceding the day when Reginald was to depart for Glasgow; and though

they knew, or at least persuaded themselves, that they would meet again when summer came round, the young friends were conscious of more than the usual share of sadness that is apt to cast its shadow over the spirits of persons similarly circumstanced. What an endless vista of time do six or eight months of the future present to the eyes of persons under twenty! Whether these months hold out the prospect of joy or of sorrow, they appear equally interminable; and if a separation be involved in their passage, then indeed it becomes something, which to contemplate is to despair."

"You will not forget me, Isabel, when I am gone?" said Reginald, for the first time venturing to put his arm round her waist. "You will call to mind these delicious rambles, and when you sit upon this stone, think kindly of him who has so often and so happily occupied the seat beside you."

"Forget you, Reginald?—oh, never, never! Till I knew you, I did not know how similarity of taste brings people together. I had no brother till you became such to me; I had no friend till Providence sent you here. How, then, is it possible that I should forget, even if I be forgotten?"

"Then you never will forget, for you cannot be forgotten! Dear, dear Isabel! would to God

it had been my good fortune to be one of yourselves, that I might be near you at all seasons—live for you, die for you !"

Isabel could not answer; for already the tears had broken from their fountain, and were rolling silently and slowly over her cheeks. At last one fell upon Reginald's hand as he passed it over to grasp hers.

"You weep, Isabel," cried he: "nay, then, it is madness to keep the mask upon our brow any longer. We are young, yet I love you, dear girl—love you as man never loved woman! Isabel, may I hope that I do not love in vain ?"

No reply escaped her. She had no power of speech; but the throbbing heart, the quick and laboured breathing, were a thousand-fold more eloquent, than words. Inexperienced as he was in such matters, Reginald could not mistake these symptoms. He clasped her to his bosom, imprinted a kiss on her coral lips, and their fates were sealed for ever.

Neither unobserved nor disregarded on the part of Mr. Monro and Cyril had been the growing attachment between these innocent young creatures. Of some of the remarks which it drew from them notice has already been taken. It was about an hour after the occurrence of the adventure just described that the respectable confederates met.

"Well, what have you discovered, Monro?" demanded Cyril, while the tutor advanced towards him on a bank of level sand close to the water's edge, which he was traversing backwards and forwards like a sentinel on duty.

"Quite enough to set our minds at rest on one point, at all events. A more truly pastoral —nay, Arcadian scene, never was enacted in the presence of an admiring witness: gentle graspings of the hand, delicate pressures of the waist, and soft confessions, breathed rather than uttered, and as touching an interchange of plighted love and troth as the heart of the most romantic could desire."

"Nay, speak in plain English, man, and tell me at once what it is that you have witnessed, and how you contrived to witness it."

"Why, then, listen, and mark how a plain tale shall confound thy sophisms. You doubted Reginald's warmth, or you gave him credit for more of prudence than to get entangled in a rash engagement. It is by no means impossible, that, had we continued here six months longer, matters would have gone on till the end of these months exactly as they have hitherto done. But your hour of parting has always proved a snare to young and loving hearts. I was sure that it could exert its accustomed influence here, and I resolved to verify my own

suspicions by ocular demonstration. Well, I lounged about the manse, skulking behind trees and crags, till I saw the hopeful couple sally forth. Fortunately for me, they were too much occupied with each other's conversation to pay any heed to external objects; for, taking a more abrupt turn westward than I had calculated on their doing, they actually passed within arm's length, and nothing but the stem of a thin birch to screen me. But they did pass; and following them at a respectful distance, I tracked them to the cliff of which the young lady is so fond, and there observed them sit down. You know that it is peculiarly open to the movements of a skilful eaves-dropper, for, behind — the wood closes in thickly; and there is a ledge, by creeping under which you may lay yourself within a foot of the flat surface, and yet escape detection. Well, thither I made my way; and of all that followed I leave your fertile imagination to draw a picture."

"What! you don't mean that the girl was frail, or that he took advantage of her frailty?"

"Now, by my soul! Cyril, thou art the foulest-minded youth with whom it has ever been my lot to come in contact. Without pretending to possess the gift of prophecy, I venture to foretell that there is a passion, if such it ought to be called, which will yet prove thy ruin.

Why, man, if you possessed all the skill of an Ulysses, and all the courage of a Coriolanus, your bare subserviency to love's basest and meanest part would render every other qualification useless to advance your own fortunes. There was nothing between them on which the angels might blush to look."

"Admirably summed up, most pious and honest preceptor! Now, be so good as say what did pass, seeing that as yet I know only what did not."

"Well then, in few words, this:—he avowed his attachment, she owned that he was dear to her, and their faith was plighted for ever."

"Is that all?"

"All!—in the name of fortune, what more would you have? Do not our views extend to consequences that ought to arise out of this engagement? Have you forgotten the compact into which we entered, and the promissory note which, duly signed and sealed, lies at this moment snug within my writing-desk?"

"No, nor am I indifferent to the tale that you have just told, though I do own that a degree of curiosity was excited by the peroration such as the finale scarce gratified. However, there they are, their true love given and taken, and probably some visible token of its depth mutually interchanged. What are we

to do next? How shall we prevent one or other of two events from befalling; — a premature discovery by the parents and representatives on the one hand, and the natural effects of absence in allaying the force of such fantasies on the other?"

"I don't see much difficulty in accomplishing both objects. It must be your business to deal with Reginald to-night, after he returns, so as to draw from him an admission of the fact, and the absolute surrender of himself into your hands;—it must be mine to tamper with another party, of whose foot I believe that I have got the measure, and to urge occasional meetings between the happy pair, just sufficiently frequent to keep the flame burning, and yet not so often as to excite suspicion. Reginald will be at home, or I deceive myself, by this time. If your wit has been sufficiently sharp to take the hint which I have thrown out, I advise an immediate conference."

Cyril saw the prudence of this advice, and hurried away to act upon it, while the tutor set off at a round pace in an opposite direction on some errand of his own. For the present our business is with Cyril, who, happily for his projects, had time to cast his dressing-gown about him, and sit down at the table with a book open before him, ere his cousin's

step was heard in the passage. When the latter entered, moreover, he was flushed and agitated; a circumstance which furnished to Cyril the sort of cue of which he could advantageously make use. He shut his book as if startled, and rising up, entreated Reginald to say whether anything had befallen.

"Nothing in the world," replied the youth, while a deeper blush crimsoned his cheek: "what should befal in a place like this? Why should you ask the question?"

"I scarcely know, Reginald," replied Cyril gravely; "but your appearance is that of one who has been flurried, agitated, it may be alarmed, by some unlooked-for accident: and you are late, my dear cousin; the clock has struck ten a full half-hour ago."

"It is not easy to quit a country like this without being agitated," answered Reginald: "and really one cannot mark the passage of time, with the distressing thought in one's mind that by to-morrow at this time we shall be far distant."

"The country is beautiful enough," replied Cyril; "yet I remember that the day is not very distant when you heartily wished yourself back at Morley, beside your mother and your old nurse."

"Ah! that was before——"

"Before what, Reginald? Speak out, man;—nay, do not turn away as if you desired to hide your blushes, or to deceive me into a belief that there is really nothing on your mind. I know that there is. I am not blind, Reginald: neither am I unobservant. Believe me that I have seen for some time back enough, and more than enough, to make you grave, and me anxious and unhappy."

"What can you mean, Cyril? I am sure that, as far as I am concerned, nothing has befallen——"

"Of which you, or any one connected with you, need be ashamed: but a great deal, my dear fellow, that may occasion distress to yourself, and more than distress to those who take the deepest interest in you.—But I see that the glare of the lamp overpowers you. What say you—are you equal to a stroll with me by the waterside, where we may perhaps be tempted to converse more openly, seeing that the one will not have light enough to observe the effect produced upon the other's countenance."

Reginald assented; protesting, however, though in a very wavering tone, that, as far as he was concerned, there was no mystery that required elucidation. They accordingly walked out; and Cyril, putting his arm through that of his cousin, brought back again their con-

versation to the topic which they had partially discussed in-doors.

"I repeat, Reginald, that there is something on your mind which you would fain communicate to me, were you not fearful that I would blame, where perhaps you will find that I only compassionate. Is it not a fact that you have been too happy at the manse?"

Reginald started. Little practised in the art of deceiving, he had parried with great difficulty the indirect attacks of his cousin: how to meet this home-thrust, except by acknowledging its justice, he knew not. His reply, therefore, amounted only to a repetition of the question, "why such a notion should be encouraged?"

"Because every act—I had almost said every word and look of yours, since the day on which your acquaintance with that excellent family began, has betrayed you. Why did you take up your abode there for an entire week without communicating either to Monro or me your intention of doing so? Why have you been so shy of discussing the merits of the friends who engrossed so many of your hours? Why are you altogether so changed,—so much more thoughtful, it may be anxious, than you used to be? I am afraid, Reginald, that you have put your own peace in jeopardy. I hope only that you have not gone further."

Reginald was silent for some moments, during which his breath went and came like that of a man on whom strong passion is working. At last he spoke.

"It would serve no good purpose were I to hide from you, Cyril, that there is truth in all that you have surmised. I *have* been too happy at the manse,—a great deal too happy for my own peace, and for the peace of another, now that the hour of parting is arrived. Yet I would not, if I could, recall the past. Nothing has taken place for which my own conscience accuses me; and so long as we find an approving answer there, I have been taught to believe that there is small ground to apprehend serious rebukes elsewhere."

"On the score of moral propriety, I grant you," answered Cyril: "but in reference to the dictates of what the world calls prudence, your theory is open to objection. Then you do love Isabel?"

"I cannot deny it. She is every way worthy of my love, and she has it."

"But she does not know her power, I trust?" demanded Cyril, with well-feigned anxiety.

"As far as a sincere confession on my part can make her know it, she does," replied his cousin."

"Good God! you have not been so imprudent!" exclaimed Cyril: "you have not acted

so rash a part as to come to an open avowal? At all events, you have extorted no confession from her, nor entered into any engagement?"

"I have given to her, not two hours ago, my plighted troth, and received hers in return; and no power on earth, or under the earth, will prevail upon me to withdraw it."

"Was ever occurrence so unfortunate!" cried Cyril, withdrawing his arm from that of Reginald, and wringing his hands. "Plighted your troth to — a beautiful and a gentle girl, I allow, and possessed of noble feelings and a highly cultivated understanding—but, after all, but the granddaughter of a poor Scottish parson. My dear Reginald, your father will no more consent to such a match than he will fly."

"I don't know as to that. Remember, I am his only son—indeed his only child; and that his fortune is so large, that, on the score of money, he could not offer objections: and then, as to lineage and descent, the period is past when even we men of Cornwall might be expected to take that matter into account, in cases where it stands single-handed in opposition to personal merit. My father may be an odd man in some respects, but I believe him to be both a just and a generous one; and I had intended by to-morrow's post to make him aware of the state of my feelings,

and to entreat his sanction to the prosecution of my suit."

"Nor shall I for one moment oppose myself to so wise a determination," replied Cyril: "the act will evince on your part becoming candour towards your father, and he will extricate you from your difficulties by putting a stop at once to the farther cultivation of such an acquaintance."

"You don't mean what you say?" demanded Reginald.

"Yes, but I do, though," answered Cyril. "I know your father as well as you do, and I have as little doubt touching the issue of your application as I have of my own existence."

"Then, my dear fellow, what would you advise?" asked Reginald imploringly.

"Nay, cousin, had you reposed confidence in me at an earlier stage in this business, I might have advised to some purpose; for I would have recommended immediate flight, let the distress of the moment be what it might. But I own to you that, after what you have just stated, I am at a loss what course to recommend. Have you positively pledged your troth either to other?"

"We have indeed; and, in doing so, have sworn to be true to the vow while life shall endure."

"Upon my honour, then, I scarce know what to say. One thing, however, is very certain;—that not, for any consideration, must you so much as palter with a vow of which an innocent and unsuspecting girl like that is the object. Time may work wonders for you both: she may forget you when you are absent, or you may forget her, and then excuses will present themselves of which you may readily make use. But——"

"Excuses, my dear Cyril! You do not suppose that I repent this engagement, or that I am already seeking a loophole through which to escape from it? The advice that I desire is, how to act so as to insure for myself sooner or later the power of accomplishing my vow, and calling Isabel Livingston my own."

"Then you must not begin by informing your father that such a creature exists. My life upon it, if the first use he made of such intelligence would not be to separate you at a moment's warning, and render your meeting again impossible."

"You know my father's temper as well as I do, Cyril,—perhaps better; and I own that, in spite of the most anxious wish to the contrary, I must believe you. How, then, am I to act?"

"Why thus,—for I see no other course before me. You must keep your attachment a

profound secret from all who don't know it already: you must be content to correspond as little as possible: you must agree to meet but seldom, and to try the effect of absence,—whether it abates your passion, or otherwise. If it do, things will take their course, and this rash engagement, like many others, will wear out: if it do not, then you must wait your proper time. You are both very young; you know as yet nothing of the world,—probably little of yourselves. It would be madness to draw tighter a noose which has been cast a great deal too rashly. In the mean while, you may safely rely on my friendship, that whatever can be done to promote your happiness shall be done. But I warn you not to let Monro guess at what is in progress: he has no concealments from Sir Charles, and certainly would not begin by making a concealment of this. Does my counsel please you?"

"Perfectly, my dear Cyril," replied Reginald, grasping his cousin's hand: "there is truth and wisdom in every word you have spoken. It may be that I have acted rashly,—perhaps, as far as Isabel is concerned, ungenerously; for long years will probably pass ere the obstacles to our union moulder away. But I could not help it,—indeed I could not; and,

what is more, I never can regret it. She is the sweetest creature——"

"Ay, ay, I know all that," interrupted Cyril gaily; "it is the old story over again. However, as I have not myself been so fortunate as to win the heart of any maiden equally sweet, we will, if you please, cut it short, and return home."

The young men walked back, apparently well pleased with what they had respectively done and said, and without waiting for their tutor, who stayed abroad that night unusually late, retired, after making a few final preparations for to-morrow's journey, to their chambers.

CHAPTER VII.

ARRANGEMENTS.

WHILE the cousins were thus taking "sweet counsel together" on a matter which deeply, though very differently, interested both, their tutor was making his way along the margin of the lake, till he arrived at a spreading oak, about a long musket-shot from the manse, under the shelter of whose boughs he took his station. He had not long occupied this position ere a flutter of female habiliments gave notice that some one was approaching. He advanced in the direction of the sound, and in a few moments held in his grasp a hand which cordially returned the squeeze with which it was greeted.

"Now this *is* kind," said he tenderly, "very kind, and therefore very like yourself."

"Oo, I am a' in a flutter," replied the well-known voice of Miss Mysie; "'deed, an' I am no' sure that it is just the thing to come out at this hour o' the night on sic an errand. If ony-

body kent it I would lose my character altogether; and maybe it 's no' safe."

"With me, my dear Miss Macwhapple, what danger should you apprehend? From such I am ever ready to shield you, but not to lead you into peril."

"Na, na, I dinna think you would just fling me into the loch, or do me ony ither bodily hurt; but, as the minister says, it 's a rash thing to put oursel's in the way o' temptation; for wha kens how soon they may be left to themselves."

"Have I ever given you cause to suspect me of any design so atrocious? Has not my manner been throughout as respectful as even you could desire?"

"I am no' denying that you have aye behaved like a douce and weel-bred lad in my company; but we munna tamper wi 'Sautan. 'Strong desire and convenient opportunity,' ye ken, is what wonna always be resisted."

"But to-night my business is of too melancholy a nature to permit such thoughts to arise even in your company. We meet to say farewell! At an early hour to-morrow I shall be on my way from a country which contains all that I value upon earth."

"Wae 's me! I am very sorry for you, Maister Monro; but dinna be chicken-hearted. I'll

no' forget ye when ye 're gane; and the summer 'ill soon come round again, and bring ye back to us."

"So it will, Miss Macwhapple, provided events do not occur to carry me from Scotland altogether — if indeed worse consequences fail to arise out of them."

"Lord's sake! what do you mean, Maister Monro? Ye 'll frighten me out o' my wits if ye dinna speak plain. Oh, I am as weak as water!"

As she uttered this, the lady reeled and would have fallen had not her companion caught and supported her in his arms, where she lay for some moments, apparently deprived, by excess of agitation, of all power to move or speak. Nothing could exceed the tender solicitude of Mr. Monro: he conveyed her to a bank under the oak, caused her to sit down, and passing his arm round her waist, rested her head on his shoulder. She had not, however, sat thus half a minute ere she started to her feet with a sudden bound.

"Ye 've pitten me down in a dub, ye stupid fool!" cried she; "I am as weet as if I had been harled through the loch."

Even Mr. Monro, master as he was of the great art of dissimulation, found it a hard matter to sustain his gravity while witnessing this

explosion: for the ill-used shepherdess, suiting the action to the word, caught up the nether portion of her cloak, and shook it violently, protesting all the while that she was never so maltreated in the whole course of her life. "Had he nae een in his head, or did he clap her on purpose in the only puddle that was to be found far or near? But it saired her quite right; she had no business to come straiking abroad to meet him or ony ither man at sic an untimous hour at nicht." At last, however, Miss Mysie's wrath became in some measure appeased; upon which her companion led back the conversation to the point from which it had diverged.

"I am quite serious, Miss Macwhapple;—Fate has, I fear, raised up an obstacle to the accomplishment of our wishes, such as we shall never be able to surmount; for if I lose the friendship of my patron, then am I without hope of ever gaining a settlement in the world."

"But what suld gar ye lose his friendship?" demanded Miss Mysie. "Ye 've been a gude and faithfu' tutor to his bairns, that I 'll answer for; and ye aye tell'd me he was a generous and a gratefu' man."

"Yes, Miss Macwhapple; but he has his humours, too. This unfortunate attachment of Reginald to your niece——"

"What makes it unfortunate, Mr. Monro?

Bell Livington's just as weel born, by the mother's side onyhow, as Reginald Trevenean, or the best baronet's son in England."

"I admit that; but on the father's side you will allow that matters are not quite so straight. Now, as these poke-pudding, purse-proud English folks have a trick of calculating people's descent only through their fathers, I am afraid Sir Charles will hardly be persuaded, even in this instance, to put the Livingstons out of view."

"An' that's owr true, to be sure," answered the lady gravely. "I canna think what my sister could ever see about the minister body at all. He's a gude man in his way, nae doot: but it was an awfu' down-come for a Macwhapple to tak up wi' the like o' him."

"All that may be very just, Miss Macwhapple," continued Monro, "but it will scarcely help us out of our present difficulties. If this engagement reach Sir Charles's ears, off we go on the instant; I am turned about my business, as the reward of my carelessness, and the office which would have enabled me to support my dear Miss Mysie in a manner becoming her birth and station, passes from my grasp like thin air."

"Ye dinna mean to say there's ony positive engagement?" demanded the lady eagerly.

"That they 've been owr grit, maybe, for their ain peace, I can very well believe; but I am no' thinking it has come to an engagement."

"I assure you that this very evening, on their favourite rock, they came to an explanation, and bound themselves one to the other by vows as solemn, perhaps as tender, as any that have ever passed between us."

"Lord have a care o' me! that 's unfortunate indeed. Puir things! puir things! I 'm sorry for them, too. Sae young and sae bonny! I 'm fearfu' they have sawn seed that 'ill bring forth but a crap o' sorrow."

"It was rash in the extreme," replied Monro, "yet not unnatural neither. You and I know from experience, that to control the impulse of strong passion is not an easy matter. Still, to return to the point from which I set out; this unlucky affair between the young people, if it get wind, will ruin our prospects for ever."

"And what for suld it get wind? The deed has been done in secret, and in secret lat it rest. What 's onybody's business to inquire into it?"

"Then you would break off the acquaintance entirely? That were the more prudent course, I believe, — but it would be a painful one, too."

"Break it off, and break with it the heart o' puir Bell? — Na, na, Maister Monro, that 'll

no' do neither. Maybe I hae yielded to your persuasions with a readiness that wouldna just bear to be tried by the test o' womanly dignity, and let ye ken your power lang before I should ha' done sae. But I tell ye fairly, that sooner than wring the heart o' puir Bell, I would sacrifice baith you and mysel' and a' the rest o' God's living creatures. I took the bairn from a worthless mother when she was an infant; I have watched owr her with a parent's love ever since; and I would sooner lay my own head under the waters o' Loch Moideart, than be the means o' wringing from her one tear o' real agony. I 'll be nae party to breaking off a connexion which, however, I am free to admit, would perhaps better not have been formed."

"Now there spoke the generous and high-minded woman—there spoke Miss Macwhapple. I perfectly agree with you in all your sentiments. If it come to the worst, we must sacrifice ourselves: but why should that be? If the affair could be kept secret till Sir Charles were out of the way, or some favourable opportunity of communicating with him occurred, I should not despair of seeing both our and their wishes fully realized. They are very young—they may well wait a few years, till they come to our time of life, or, it may be, till they pass it."

"I am no', in general, a freend to lang engagements," replied Miss Mysie with a marked intonation of voice; "which very seldom lead to good, which very often end in mischief: but, in this case, such an 'arrangement may be necessary. I think, however, that the minister ought to know. It's no' right for a child to keep ony secrets frae a parent."

"If the minister know, Sir Charles will soon know likewise. The minister is a very good man, but his ideas are necessarily contracted by the sort of life he has led. I venture to say, that the first use he would make of his knowledge would be to send Bell out of the way till Sir Charles should find an opportunity of recalling us all to Morley. No, no, Miss Macwhapple; there are but two roads before us, and one or other we must follow. Either the secret must be kept faithfully, or we must make a merit of necessity, and become informers ourselves."

"I believe you are right," replied the lady: "the minister has foolish notions about propriety and decorum, and canna be trusted in a case like this. He wouldna mind poor Bell's grief a bodle, so long as he fancied he was doing what he calls his duty. You and me can manage this business ourselves."

"I think that *I* had better not appear in it,"

replied Monro. "You can easily get from the girl a confession of all that has happened; and, without making her aware that the truth is known to more than yourself, there will be no lack of counsel should you at any time require it."

"Weel then, we'll just lat it be sae. I'll hae some talk wi' Bell this very nicht before we sleep; and ye shall know the upshot as soon as I can find time to write."

Thus ended the conference; for of the more tender dialogue that followed—the vows of everlasting fidelity, the promises of frequent communication, with all the other passages that are apt to occur when a loving spinster of fifty bids adieu for a season to an enamoured swain of thirty-seven, it is not necessary to give any account. Such scenes are best enacted under the veil of strict privacy; to remove which would involve us in the guilt of direct breach of confidence. It will be better, therefore, after dismissing Mr. Monro with a brief notice,—such as, that he reached home in high glee, crept quietly to bed, and slept like a top,—if we follow the steps of Miss Mysie, whose first business, after letting herself in by the back-door of the manse, was to examine, as well as the light of a peat-fire would allow, the extent of damage which her pale-blue silk mantle had sus-

tained. The result of the examination appeared to be satisfactory, for the lady smiled as she hung up the garment to dry, and passed with a quiet tread towards her niece's apartment, from beneath the door of which the reflection of a candle still showed itself. As Miss Mysie raised the latch very gently, and Isabel took no notice of the proceeding, the former was permitted to gaze, for a moment or two, unheeded, on a spectacle which even she could not witness without emotion.

Isabel sat before her toilet, her beautiful dark hair streaming in rich and glossy masses over her shoulders. On the table beside her lay curl-papers and brushes, not yet used. A portion of her dress, cast aside, as it seemed, some time previously, hung over the back part of a chair a little way removed, while the long wick of the candle pointed out, that thoughts too interesting to be suppressed or controlled had triumphed, and that the present was forgotten amid fantasies of the past and of the future. For her attitude was that of one who is entirely engrossed by secret meditation: her forehead rested upon one arm, which again lay across the table; and her back being turned towards the door, she could neither see the tall form of her aunt as it passed the threshold, nor prepare to bid her welcome. Aunt Mysie

was touched by what she saw, and moving towards her niece, laid her hand gently upon her shoulder.

Isabel sprang to her feet, and exhibited a countenance in which the traces of various and conflicting feelings were clearly discernible. Her cheeks were moist, and the blood mantled through them and over her brow as, with a half-uttered shriek, she besought the intruder to say whether any accident had happened.

"None in the world, my dear," replied Miss Mysie affectionately: "none, unless it be to yoursel'. But why are you so late up to-night? and why is there a tear in your eye, and a blush on your cheek?"

"I don't know, aunt," replied she, her voice faltering as she spoke: "I am afraid I have done wrong. I am not happy, and yet I feel that I ought to be."

"Why so, my love?" continued Miss Mysie, embracing her niece with sincere affection: "I am sure, if an innocent and pure mind can ever be the source of happiness to any one, you need not be unhappy."

"Ah, it was once so!" replied Bell, the tears now gushing out upon her aunt's bosom; "but now—I have been imprudent, if not worse;—I am—very, very unhappy!"

"Cannot I guess the cause, Bell?" said Miss

Mysie in a soothing tone: "to-morrow Reginald leaves us, and your young heart ——"

"Oh, aunt, if you love me, say no more. I fear that I have done very wrong; but I have just taken council of God, and to-morrow grand-papa shall know all."

"And may not I too be trusted, Bell? Your grandfather loves you tenderly, but he cannot love you as I do, — being, as you are, the living image of my dear lost sister."

"Not only may you be trusted, dear aunt, but consulted,—that is, if you have patience to listen to the idle tale of an idle girl, whose heart already condemns her, and who is therefore well prepared to receive sentence of condemnation from others. Oh, aunt, I have been very, very imprudent!"

"In what respect, my love? Speak out—do not fear to unburthen your mind wholly."

"In my intercourse with Reginald, I did not know—I could not dream that it would have come to this!"

"That you should get over fond o' him, and he over fond o' you,—isna' that it? Puir bairn! if you couldna dream o' sic a thing befalling, other folk could—and see it too."

"Then why was not I warned in time? All this and much more might have been avoided had I been told of my danger."

"What danger, bairn? For my part, I dinna see muckle danger, or harm either, in two innocent and artless young creatures forming an intimacy in their youth, that promises, if weel managed, to bring comfort to their maturer years, and peace to their auld age."

"But you forget, aunt," replied Isabel, looking up with the air of one who half desires, half expects to be contradicted: "you forget that I am no fit match for Reginald Trevenean. I am but a poor portionless Highland girl—he is the heir of a title and a princely fortune."

"Ye mayna be sae rich as he, Bell—and of that I am aware the world taks muckle count. But if your blood by the grandmother's side be weighed against his, I'se warrant it 'll no' be found lighter."

"Nay, nay, it is idle to talk thus," answered Isabel, despondency again overpowering whatever of hope aunt Mysie's former sentence might have created. "Of birth I can make no boast, were such things regarded,—but they are not: and in all other respects can you imagine that Sir Charles will consider me worthy to be his son's wife—or, it may be, Reginald himself continue to think so when he is a few years older?"

"Not knowing exactly what may have passed between you, Bell, it is impossible for

me to answer for the young man's bearing. But if *he* set his heart on having you, I cannot believe that his father will, for any base or worldly motive, stand between an only son and a' his hopes of happiness."

"Much more has passed between us, aunt, than ought to have done. He told me more than it became me, perhaps, to learn; and I have concealed nothing from him."

"Then ye have plighted your true love to ane anither, and maybe exchanged tokens?"

"It is even so, aunt. He gave me this ring in return for a lock of my hair, which he told me he should wear in his bosom till he could call me his own."

"Puir things! puir young things! May ye baith be true to your vows, and may Heaven prosper them!"

"But, aunt, is this right? Is it becoming in me to have thus entangled a young man into an engagement to which his parents are not privy, and of which my grandpapa knows nothing?"

"I 'll no' just say that it is right. But of the right and the wrang you ought to have thought sooner. It 's done now, onyhow, and we maun mak the maist o 't."

"I meant to do so, aunt, believe me,—I meant to tell all to grandpapa the first thing

in the morning, and was praying God to strengthen me in that determination when you entered."

"Then, my love, ye maun reverse that prayer. Ye have done your duty by telling me. Your grandfather's an auld frail man, and intelligence o' that nature could not fail to agitate,—wha kens but it might be the end of him? Leave all that to me: I'll take care that naething comes o't of which either you or I will have cause to be ashamed. But I 'll no' agree to trouble the minister wi' ony sic communication."

"Perhaps, then, you will write to Reginald yourself, and tell him that I release him from his engagement, and that I see it will be better for us both never to meet again."

"I 'll write nae sic letter, Bell, that ye may depend upon," replied Miss Mysie, her kinder feelings being sincerely interested for the poor girl, whose tears flowed fast as, in a desponding and broken voice, she gave utterance to this magnanimous declaration: "I 'm no' going to break your heart and Reginald's by acting sae unkind a part to either of you. Na, na, if ye'll only be ruled by me, I think I can manage matters so as to give you at least a chance of discovering how far your attachment is likely to last before I put an end to the acquaintance. If indeed ye baith find that absence

brings forgetfulness, it may be all well and good to let the knot loosen of itself: but if ye baith continue in your present mind, I dinna see whatfor ye should despair of coming together yet,—that is, supposing ye have patience to bide your time. There may be difficulties in your way, and delays, and crosses; but where there's a will there's a way. Na, na, Bell, my dear, I 'm no' going to wring your young breast wi' ony such ungentle treatment as that."

"Oh, aunt, you are too kind—you are too good! This is indeed much more than I could have expected even of you. And yet my mind misgives me, lest you involve both yourself and us in difficulties from which we shall never escape."

"Leave you a' that to me, my dear. I 've lived langer in the world, and seen more of its ways, than ye have done; and, I dare say, will be able to get baith you and mysel' out of ony scrape that we may fall into. In the mean while, ye maun give me one solemn pledge; which is, that ye tak naebody else into your confidence; and that you hold no communication with Reginald, either by letter or otherwise, except with my privacy. Are you willing to do that?"

"Oh, aunt, not that only, but anything else

which you may require of me. I am yours, and yours only."

"Spoken like a good and wise bairn. And now let me advise you to dismiss from your mind all misgivings and fears of having done wrong; say your prayers as usual, without, however, remembering this exchange of true love among the number of your transgressions; and ask His blessing on my honest endeavours to promote your happiness and that of Reginald; and then lie down and sleep soundly, without fearing for the issue. There is One above that never deserts such as sincerely love and serve Him."

Once more Isabel embraced her aunt, who returned the pressure with great affection; and her dreams were that night as joyous and vivid as the dreams of a maiden are apt to be who fancies that in her case the sentence has been reversed which says,

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE INTRIGUES.

At an early hour on the following morning, Cyril, Reginald, and their worthy tutor, Mr. Monro, were pursuing their way towards the metropolis of the West. A cart, with a seat across, the ordinary vehicle of the country, conveyed them and their baggage through the Highland passes, and was exchanged only at Luss, on Loch Lomond side, for a post-chaise. Neither the magnificence of the surrounding scenery, however, nor the remarkable elasticity of the atmosphere, seemed to have any effect in leading on conversation: all were as moody and silent as if each had found in his own thoughts as much as he desired to interest, if not to amuse; so that when they alighted, after night-fall, at the door of their lodging in College-street, they did so without having interchanged five sentences throughout a journey of sixty miles in extent.

A resumption of his studies, and a renewal

of such amusements as Glasgow was then in a condition to afford, soon brought back Cyril to a frame of mind similar to that which possessed him when last a sojourner in the place. With Reginald a directly contrary result occurred. For a month or two he was cheerful, contented, and happy; but the disposition left him by degrees, till he became in the end depressed and gloomy, holding no intercourse with strangers, and very little even with his companions. The change did not pass unobserved by either of them; neither were they at a loss to account for it, having themselves mainly contributed to bring about results out of which they calculated on furthering their own ends. For they began to perceive that Reginald, although somewhat more impetuous than he used to be, was still too gentle, perhaps too timid, to deviate very widely, if left to himself, from the beaten road of propriety.

"He is such a phlegmatic animal," said Cyril, "that unless we frighten him into the snare, he will move round it and round it for ever, without once thinking that the leap ought to be taken. You must deal with your old helpmate somewhat, and get her to play with his feelings. Let us work a bit on his weak side also; excite his doubts and fears just sufficiently to inflame his passion, such as it is, and then strike a sud-

den blow. If anything can bring matters to an issue it will be this, though even of it I have my doubts."

Reginald had written to Isabel repeatedly, his letters being filled on each occasion with protestations of the warmest love. He had received answers at first regularly, all of them expressing a spirit similar to that which pervaded his own; but of late Isabel had become slack in her correspondence, and the anxious mind of a lover detected, or fancied that he did, a growing reserve in her style and mode of expression. The circumstance created, of course, both grief and surprise: grief, because he was apt to fancy either that she must be ill or grown indifferent; surprise, because the more he reflected on the subject, the less did these conclusions satisfy him. It was after the receipt of one of these somewhat abrupt epistles that Reginald found himself accosted by his cousin in one of the most retired walks of the College garden.

"You are out of sorts, Reginald," said Cyril: "you have been out of sorts for some time. What has befallen you?"

"God knows, Cyril," replied Reginald, "I am what I ever was,—in mind and in body the same; but others seem to change, and I can't tell why."

"To whom do you allude?" demanded Cyril.

"You are in possession of my great secret, Cyril; and there is no reason why I should equivocate with you on minor matters. I have had but unsatisfactory accounts from Loch Moideart of late, and I am ill at ease for more reasons than one."

"Nay, my dear fellow, if that be all, let me rather congratulate you on the probable termination of your *affaire de cœur*. I told you at the outset that absence would prove the best touchstone of the real feelings of both, and it is well if it shall have effected its purpose thus speedily."

"Pardon me, Cyril," replied Reginald, "I am bringing no accusation against the good faith of any one. I said no more, than that my communications from the manse have of late been unsatisfactory, and I pray you not to fill up the blank with figures drawn from your own imagination."

"She is not ill, is she?" demanded Cyril.

"I did not say so."

"Then what is the matter? Why, man, it were better not to give your confidence at all than to give it by halves. Speak out: where does the wound rankle? what can be done to cure it?"

"Upon my honour, Cyril, I am at a loss how

to answer you," replied Reginald, his reserve at once giving way before the frankness of his relative's manner, and his old habit of subservience to the guidance of a monitor resuming its influence. "I do not know how to account for the altered tone of Isabel's letters: I am tormented with a thousand fears, possibly all of them groundless—I am harassed by the sort of intimation which my father holds out; —in one word, I am very miserable, and know not how to act."

"With respect to Isabel's letters," said Cyril, "it is impossible for me to give an opinion, not having seen them; but looking at the whole affair in a broad light ——"

"See here, then!" interrupted Reginald, handing him a short note which he had received by that day's post from Moideart; "read that, and tell me whether it is the sort of communication which you think I had a right to expect from a girl whose position towards me is of the nature of Isabel's."

Cyril took the letter, opened and read it carefully. It was very brief, and bore about it manifest symptoms of having been written under the restraint either of external surveillance or of internal misgivings. He returned it to Reginald without saying a word, and appeared for a while to be lost in thought.

"Well, what is your opinion now?" demanded Reginald.

"That there is a mystery somewhere which requires to be cleared up. Either Isabel has changed her mind, which I confess that I should be slow to credit; or she is swayed by some person who has obtained possession of her secret, and does not use the power with much delicacy. If it were a matter of real importance to have this mystery elucidated, I should say that the only effectual means of doing so must be sought in personal communication."

"A thousand thanks, my dear Cyril," cried Reginald eagerly: "the idea has occurred to myself repeatedly, though I lacked either firmness or wisdom enough to act upon it. But now that it strikes you in the same light, I cannot hesitate a moment longer: I will set out to-morrow, and you will go with me, I trust."

"I doubt whether it will be practicable for either of us to do that, replied Cyril. "Monro has just got a letter from Morley to say that we are expected there early in next month, and that your father has serious thoughts of sending us abroad or purchasing commissions for us in the army."

"If we were expected at Morley to-morrow, I should spend to-day at Loch Moideart," an-

swered Reginald. "You may act as you please; but, since the time is so short, I will set out an hour hence."

"What shall we say to Monro?" asked Cyril."

"What should we say? That we desire to visit the scene of our pleasant holidays once more; or, if you like it better, that we wish to say farewell to the minister's family. Surely there can be nothing in such a tale to rouse either suspicion or surprise."

"I dare say not," replied Cyril carelessly; "and here in good time comes the Dominie himself. By Jove! he looks as if he had some intelligence to convey to us. Do you observe how light his tread is, and how full his eyes are of meaning?"

Before Reginald could answer, Mr. Monro was beside them; nor were they long kept in suspense as to the nature of the communication which it was his business to make.

"Of all the birds in the air," cried he, "who do you think have just alighted in Glasgow?"

The young men, as might have been expected, could not possibly guess; and their feelings may be imagined when the tutor abruptly told them, "Personages not less important than the ladies from the manse of Moideart. Here

is good aunt Mysie's *billet-doux*, dated, as you may observe, from the Buck's Head. Read it, and satisfy yourselves that I am no romancer."

The young men did read; the one, as it seemed, with almost as much of eagerness as the other; though the note contained very little in which they were likely to take an interest beyond the announcement of the writer's arrival. To Reginald, however, that was everything; and his mode of acting as soon as he had returned the billet to its owner gave proof that he so accounted it. He quitted his companions on the instant, and hurrying through the streets, stopped not till he had reached the inn where Isabel and her aunt were sojourning. It is useless to think of describing the sort of reception that awaited him there. Whatever of coldness seemed to have pervaded her letters, exercised no influence over Isabel's manner: she fell into his arms, rested her head on his shoulder, and shed a torrent of tears.

"Oh, how grateful I am to the cause, whatever it may be, that has brought you here, Isabel!" exclaimed Reginald, as soon as his emotion became sufficiently moderated to permit his speaking. "Your letters have been so cold of late, so unlike what I expected to receive from you—so different from what they once were, that I began to apprehend Heaven knows what, and to

meditate a thousand extravagant schemes. But all is forgotten now: you are still mine own Isabel; dear to me as you ever were, affectionate and confiding as I used to find you when our intercourse was the most unrestrained."

"'Deed Reginald," said Miss Mysie, whose presence had in no degree cast a spell over the meeting of the young lovers, and who looked not unmoved, albeit little given to the melting mood, "if ony blame be due anent this matter, you maun lat me bear it. I didna think it quite proper for a young leddy to be writing what ye ca' love-letters to a young gentleman at college. To be civil to a freend is anither thing; but the Macwhapples were aye famed for their discretion in sic like affairs; and Bell has been taught to consider herself mair a Macwhapple than a Livingston. So dinna lat that flee stick in the wa', for she had nae hand in it."

"Let us talk no more of blame or the grounds for it," exclaimed Reginald in a joyous tone: "here you both are, what I have always found you, frank, true, generous, warm-hearted. Tell me rather by what fortunate accident you have been brought into the Low Country at the very moment I was meditating an inroad into the heart of the Highlands."

"Troth, Reginald," replied Mysie, somewhat confused, "we came entirely on business

of mine. I am sair troubled in winter wi' the rheumatics, and wanting to consult Dr. Burns, I just persuaded Bell to give me the benefit of her company: and it didna tak muckle fleeching to mak her say ay, I assure you."

I drop the curtain upon this scene, while I return to Cyril and his tutor, who were left standing on the College Green, the latter having just received from Reginald kind aunt Mysie's epistle. They were silent till Reginald had turned the corner of Hunter's Museum, when Monro, casting a look of much meaning upon his companion, said,

"I think this last stroke will tell—don't you?"

"I don't think about it," was the answer; "I am sure of it. But what space of time do you propose to allow for the complétion of the plot?"

"Three days ought to suffice; but we can give four, should they be required."

"Have you got Sir Charles's letter, then?"

"No; but I expect it by to-morrow's post; and I need not add, it will be abundantly decisive."

"And in the mean while how are we to proceed?"

"Pretty much as we have hitherto done; you dealing directly with him, I indirectly with the girl. Having brought them together under

circumstances so favourable, the deuce is in it if we fail to make our own out of it. In the mean while, I must get round my old woman; and as you would be considerably in the way during a conference so delectable as ours, I pray you to shift for yourself, while 'on the wings of love I seek my gentle mate.'"

Cyril laughed, took his friend's hint, and the confederates parted, one turning short off at College-street, the other traversing High-street and the Trongate towards the Buck's Head.

The meeting between aunt Mysie and Mr. Monro was of a kind which, however interesting to the individuals themselves, scarce demands repetition. Neither, indeed, did any event befall of which it is necessary to take especial notice, till the postman's double rap in College-street announced next day the arrival of despatches for the Treveneans. The little party were at breakfast, when a packet of letters was handed in, and each seized with avidity such as were addressed to himself. That for Reginald was from his father, and ran thus:—

"Dear Reginald,

"It gives me sincere pleasure to hear of the improvements that have taken place, as well in your bodily health as in your mental acquire-

ments. You need not be told how very precious you are in the sight both of your mother and of me; for besides that you are our only son—indeed our only child, we cannot but regard you as the sole representative of a family which for many generations has filled no mean place in the aristocracy of Cornwall. Neither can you doubt that your peculiar position imposes both upon you and me duties by which, under other circumstances, we should not feel ourselves so closely tied down. I am bound to see you settled, with the prospect of giving future heirs to Morley, with as little delay as may be consistent with propriety; and you are bound to offer to the arrangement no unnecessary obstacles.

"You are aware of the intimacy which subsisted in early life between Lord Templetown and myself,—an intimacy which differences in political opinions of very recent growth could scarcely interrupt. Times are changed however, and Lord Templetown, awakened to the real views of the party with which he has hitherto acted, is disposed to abandon them, and to take the same side of the question with us. He has even offered to join his interest with mine in order to return you, whenever you come of age, for the county; and more than insinuates, that nothing would make him so happy as a

match between his daughter Julia and yourself. You have not seen much of Lady Julia: we have seen a good deal of her lately, and I assure you that a more amiable person never lived. She will make you an admirable wife in every respect; and as she is an only child, her dowry will be princely. In one word, I wish you to come home as soon after the receipt of this as possible, in order that we may make you acquainted with your future bride.

"You will, I believe, be twenty next birthday; and Lord Templetown and myself have agreed that the marriage shall not take place till you are of age. In the mean while, you and Lady Julia ought to know something of one another: after which you can either travel on the Continent or join the army, according to your own taste. I have written by this post to Mr. Monro and Cyril. With your mother's best regards, your affectionate father,

"C. TREVENEAN."

The expression of Reginald's countenance while perusing the above sufficed to make his companions aware that the intelligence which he had received was of more than common interest. He did not, however, make any disclosure; but, putting the letter in his pocket, rose and quitted the room. Cyril was not

slow to follow, and soon drew from him a declaration not only of his father's views, but of his own determinations. No consideration on earth should ever induce him to wed Lady Julia. He could not, perhaps, refuse to be introduced to her,—nor might it be prudent to avow his intentions elsewhere; but he should take every method of conveying to the young lady such an impression of him as should render her quite as disinclined to the match as himself. He must say, that he regarded the whole business as a piece of extreme parental tyranny. His recollections of his father were all forbidding in the extreme; and it seemed as if the future was not destined to efface them. He was exceedingly grieved; but, on the whole, he felt as much of indignation as of sorrow.

"And poor Isabel," said Cyril, "what will she say to this?"

"She shall never know it, Cyril. Why should I distress her by communicating circumstances which cannot possibly affect her one way or the other?"

"Pardon me, Reginald; I know you at least as well as you know yourself, and I am convinced that when they once get you to Morley, in the society of a girl so beautiful, so accomplished as Lady Julia, you will yield to your duty as a son what you may at first refuse to a

softer passion. No, no, it were far better to prepare poor Isabel for what will happen, than to let the blow come upon her suddenly and crush her."

"I tell you, Cyril, that they may hew me to pieces, but they will never make me forget Isabel, or violate the pledge that I have given her."

"Pooh, pooh, I am sure that you mean all this; but will you be able to act up to it? Not a whit. Lovers' vows, you will be told, are never registered in heaven. You will be reminded of your own youth, of Isabel's imprudence, when your *vows* were spoken; you will be shown that the heir of the house of Trevenean is not in such matters his own master; and though you may listen at first unwillingly and distrustingly to the tale, it will in the end produce its effect. No, no, Reginald, you did wrong in stealing poor Isabel's affections as you have done; you are bound by honour, by humanity, to break with her gently and by degrees."

"Break with her, Cyril!—may Heaven break with me if I do! If I thought my father would insist on this horrid match, I would take such steps as should render compliance with his wishes impossible."

"You may assure yourself of your father's

firmness, Reginald. You know him of old: let him deliberately make up his mind to anything, and there is no power in reason, or even in pity, to divert him from it."

"It is too true," cried Reginald, walking backwards and forwards through his apartment. "My father, like all weak men, is obstinate. Well, I must make up my mind to some months, perhaps years, of wrangling; but he shall find that I can be as obstinate as he."

"I don't think your father's temper is that of a man who never forgives," said Cyril hesitatingly.

"I hope not," was the reply.

"If, for example," continued the other, not noticing Reginald's answer, "you really feel that your own happiness and that of Isabel depends on your marriage, perhaps the best plan would be to marry first, and seek a reconciliation afterwards. At all events, I am sure of one thing,—that nothing can be so mischievous, nothing so hurtful to the credit, temper, respectability, and moral principle of persons in your situation, as to continue an engagement which there is no prospect that you will ever be able to fulfil: and, therefore, as I cannot advise a private marriage, I do earnestly recommend that you come

at once to an explanation, and release one another from your trammels."

"You are my good genius, Cyril, reading my thoughts, preventing my wishes, inspiring me with resolution to act up to my own determinations. The moment I read my father's letter the idea of a private marriage occurred to me; though there needed your suggestion to mould it into form. I tell you, that not our happiness only, but our honour depends on the accomplishment of a promise given on both sides in perfect good faith, and confirmed by the most solemn appeals to Heaven. Of my father's readiness to forgive such an act, I entertain more doubts than you seem to do. But better go without his forgiveness altogether, than be forced into the breach of a solemn engagement by marrying a woman whom I should render unhappy because I did not love her. I will seek Isabel instantly, and try whether she can be prevailed upon to become mine forthwith."

"Stop a moment, my dear Reginald. You are too ready to leap at your conclusions. I advise no such thing as a private marriage: on the contrary, my advice is, that each party give and take back the pledges rashly interchanged; and that you leave it to the future

to decide whether they shall ever be renewed. But if you won't do this, then indeed I must believe that it is better to put it out of your own power to violate an oath, than to run the risk of being forced or wheedled into its violation: for, in the sight of Heaven, Isabel and you are just as much bound to one another, while these vows remain, as if you had sworn them at the altar."

"That is most true," cried Reginald, looking full in Cyril's face; "and it is not less so, that an oath once given cannot by any force of circumstances be rendered null. If we marry, therefore, we shall have done nothing more than superadded a legal ceremony to a contract which is already binding."

"And supposing you to prevail with Isabel, and the ceremony to be performed, how do you mean to dispose of your bride?"

"Carry her to Morley, to be sure, and present her to my father. I am confident that even he would receive her as his daughter."

"I am quite sure that he would not. If you marry, you must make up your mind to conceal the marriage till Sir Charles's prejudice in favour of Lady Julia dies away. When that comes to pass, then, indeed, I think you might speak out. But, on the whole, I am con-

vinced that you will do far better to disentangle yourselves altogether."

"That, my dear Cyril, is quite out of the question," replied Reginald: "I consider myself united to Isabel already; and by confirming the union in the face of the church, I but rivet the chain."

But why pursue this narrative in detail, or why carry the reader to the Buck's Head, where interviews, bearing on the same point, though somewhat differently conducted, occurred between other parties? Enough is done, when I state in few words, that Isabel's scruples,—the scruples of a romantic and doting girl of sixteen—gave way, though not without a struggle, before the expostulations and arguments of her grand-aunt. The result was, that, with a facility which belongs exclusively to Scotland, the names of the parties were published, as it is called, thrice in one day;—in other words, that the session's clerk of St. Bridget's, standing at the church-door, proclaimed to empty walls, that Reginald Trevenean and Isabella Livingston, both of that parish, proposed to become man and wife. This done, the obliging official wrote out a certificate that all had been done in order. It was carried to the minister, a stranger of course to both parties, and he attended at

the apartments in College-street at the hour required. There, in the presence of Miss Mysie and of Cyril, were Reginald and Isabel united; an arrangement of which the ordinary documentary proof, otherwise and better known as the marriage-lines, was committed to the keeping of the bride's relative.

CHAPTER IX.

ANXIETY.

THE wedding took place on a Tuesday, and throughout that day and the following the happiness of the young couple seemed to be complete. Not even the knowledge that on Thursday they must separate, appeared, except at intervals, to distress them. But our happiest hours, as has often been noted, always fly the fastest, and the moment of parting came. It was as bitter as, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, might be expected. Poor Isabel clung to her husband's embrace as if she meant to die there, and Reginald tore himself from her at last more like a maniac than a rational being. I need not add, that plans were fully arranged for carrying on constant intercourse by letter, or that each strove to inspire the other with hopes which both in reality rejected.

"Do not doubt that we shall soon meet

again, dear Isabel," said Reginald. "My father must be humoured; but I am his only son, and when he knows that I have given heart and hand to one so deserving in all respects of a better match, he will not long continue obstinate. By next summer, at the latest, I shall return to fetch you. And my mother—oh! you will be delighted with her, and she will be proud of her gentle and beautiful daughter."

"I do not doubt, Reginald—I cannot doubt that you are mine; and that thought will support me. But to part thus early—oh! my poor heart would break did I not feel that your happiness requires this sacrifice on my part."

Nor was there any want of sympathy on the side of those who had played minor parts in the drama. Aunt Mysie strove to console the bridegroom; Cyril spoke in language of encouragement, almost of endearment, to the bride, undertaking at any moment to be the bearer of such communications as either party might be unwilling to entrust to the post, and assuring both of his settled conviction that all would yet be well. Thus, amid sorrow, not unmitigated by the influence of strong hope, and tears, bitter, but not entirely springing from the fountains of grief, Reginald bade adieu to his wife of eight-and-forty hours, who betook herself to her native valley, there to

pine and weep in secret, while he hastened to conceal his own emotions by mixing in the crowd.

I am not going to describe either the particulars of Reginald's journey homewards, or the nature of the reception which met him at its close. The latter was, on the side of his father, austere enough; on the part of his mother, of a mixed nature, seeming to imply that affection was held back from indulging itself by some unexpressed conviction that restraint was necessary. Neither was he allowed time to breathe, ere his introduction to Lady Julia took place. She chanced at the moment to be a visiter at Morley—brought thither doubtless for a special purpose; and while his spirits were yet depressed by the memory of scenes gone by, and painful anticipations of the future, he found himself thrown into her society. She was all, and more than all, that his father had described her to be—beautiful, accomplished, full of grace, full of talent; yet his heart told him that there were wanting those peculiar attractions for which, according to his present view of these matters, neither beauty nor talent could compensate. Lady Julia was, in everything where heart is concerned, the very opposite of his own gentle and confiding Isabel. High-born, already familiar with the gay world, accustomed to keep

her genuine feelings so completely under control that they were never seen to work, she had smiles at command for such as appeared to merit them, and cool indifference at the service of all whom she did not consider it worth while to captivate or conciliate. Moreover, Lady Julia was somewhat dogmatical in her mode of expression. She had read much, knew a great deal more than the generality of women under twenty, and, being an only child, had learned to treat her own judgment with peculiar respect.

Such a person might be well qualified to dazzle and attract amid a crowd; but she was not calculated to win in seclusion the affections of a young man naturally shy, and therefore averse to display even in another.

Neither was Reginald more taken with the manners and address of her noble father. Smooth, civil, courteous, the peer displayed in every movement the good breeding as well as the selfishness which rarely fail to spring from an intermixture in what is called public life. He was one who appeared always to have in view some end which was not always apparent to others. His conversation, though diplomatic, was strongly imbued with party spirit: he never spoke from the heart—he spoke always from the head. Now Reginald was no politician: his ideas of happiness were of a much more

humble order, bringing with them pictures of domestic quiet, the interchange of kindly feeling, and the diffusion of contentment over a narrow circle; and he therefore felt that, had he been at liberty to do so, he should not have chosen a partner for life from such a school.

The Templetowns remained at Morley about a week after the arrival of the young men, when they departed for London. Reginald saw them to the carriage, and when it drove off, flattered himself that for a time at least he would be permitted to enjoy undisturbed the communion of his own thoughts. But he was mistaken; for the sound of wheels was yet audible from the steps when his father desired his attendance in the library. Reginald obeyed, not without a lively suspicion that the business on which they were going to enter would prove the reverse of agreeable. He sat down, however, in the chair to which Sir Charles pointed; while Sir Charles, occupying another at the opposite side of the fireplace, proceeded to open the conference.

"You have now been several days under the same roof with Lady Julia, Reginald, and I wish to know what you think of her?"

"That she is a very charming person," replied Reginald,—"as accomplished as she is beautiful."

"You are aware of the plans which Lord Templetown and I have formed?" continued his father.

"I know that you have mutually expressed a wish for my marriage with Lady Julia; but I am not aware that you have done more."

"Then it is my duty to set you right on that head," replied Sir Charles. "Having ascertained from his daughter that she is inclined to regard you favourably, Lord Templetown was so good as to come with me last night to a definitive arrangement. We intended at one time to defer the ceremony till you came of age; but, under existing circumstances we have thought it best to dispense with that delay, and put things in a train forthwith. In fact, we are agreed on the settlements, and at the close of the season you will be expected to claim your bride."

"Surely, my dear sir," said Reginald, "Lady Julia and I are to have some voice in this matter? We are as yet perfect strangers to one another, indeed I have never exchanged a single sentence with her in my life except in company."

"Lady Julia is a dutiful child who professes to have no will but that of her father," said Sir Charles coldly; "and I expect on your part a similar readiness to oblige."

"On any subject except this you have a right

to do so," answered Reginald: "but where the happiness or misery, not of myself alone, but of another is concerned, pardon me, dear sir, if I require time for deliberation."

"The happiness of another!" cried Sir Charles, looking keenly in his son's face: "what other?"

"Of Lady Julia, to be sure," replied Reginald, blushing. "Were I to give my hand where I did not give my heart, her happiness not less than my own would be compromised."

"Oh, is that all?" said Sir Charles slowly. "I thought perhaps there might have been some young person in Scotland whose happiness would be shipwrecked by your becoming the husband of another. If it be on Lady Julia's account that your fears are excited, I beg of you to lay them aside. She has spoken her mind freely—she will not be miserable as your wife."

Reginald shook in his chair, for there crossed his mind an undefined suspicion that more was meant by this than met the ear; yet he put a restraint upon himself, while he repeated his readiness to obey his father in all things which were neither inconsistent with reason nor opposed to delicacy and common justice. "But to plunge into an affair of this sort without having ascertained whether my habits are likely

to accord with those of Lady Julia, or hers with mine,—I am sure, sir, you would not wish your only son to do that?"

"I wish my only son, since he is unable to take care of himself," replied Sir Charles disdainfully, "to fall with as little delay as possible into good hands. It is my desire that you write to Lady Julia immmediately, and make her an offer of your hand."

"Immediately, sir!" cried Reginald. "Surely you would not have me take such a step without well weighing the consequences?"

"I have weighed the consequences for you, young man," answered Sir Charles sternly; "and you shall have good cause to rue them if you disobey my positive command. I expect that your letter shall be despatched by to-morrow's post, so as to reach Lady Julia on her arrival in town."

Reginald saw that it would be useless to argue the point farther; so, without giving any answer, he quitted the library. He was met in the passage by Cyril, whom he entreated to accompany him into his own room.

"For God's sake, counsel me, my dear Cyril!" cried he as soon as the door was closed: "the crisis has come upon me so much sooner than I could have anticipated, that I know not how to act."

"What is the matter?" replied Cyril anxiously.

"Oh, that cursed Lady Julia! My father has run the matter into a positive engagement, and insists on my soliciting her hand within four-and-twenty hours. How am I to evade the order? how shall I be able to struggle through my difficulties?"

"Pooh, pooh! he has done nothing so extravagant," replied Cyril; "you must have mistaken his meaning—he cannot intend anything of the sort."

"I tell you there is no mistake," exclaimed Reginald. "I am peremptorily desired to write to her to-morrow. But I will do no such thing;—I will rather go and confess all, and then let him deal with me as he sees best."

"Nay, nay, Reginald, you must not take that step neither. Consider, I pray you, the consequences, not only to yourself, but to others. We must work for delays yet awhile; and I think we shall be able to obtain them. I will go to your father."

"Do, my dear fellow, do; and God prosper you!"

Cyril went accordingly, and having been closeted with Sir Charles about half an hour, returned to Reginald with the joyful intelligence that he would not be required to write to Lady

Julia on the morrow. Nor did his influence end there: Reginald found, on resuming his place in the family circle, that both Sir Charles and his mother were inclined to soften in the reserve with which they had hitherto treated him. To be sure the former was not affectionate—he had never been affectionate in his bearing towards his son, but he was at least civil; and the latter appeared to keep her tender feelings under control not without a great and constant effort. Still Reginald was far from happy, and the constant wear and tear of anxiety began ere long to tell upon his health.

So passed the season of spring and the early months of the summer. From Scotland letters came frequently, addressed, as it had been arranged that they should be, to Cyril; in the perusal of which, albeit they were most of them deeply tinged with melancholy, Reginald found his chief consolation. For they were all such as he had reason to expect from Isabel; warm, devoted, trusting,—interspersed indeed with gentle complaints rather against fortune than her husband, but never bordering upon impatience. His answers were, as may be imagined, dictated all of them in a similar spirit. He cheered his young bride; bade her hope for better times,—lamented the difficulties by which they were beset, and sum-

med up all by protesting the unchangeableness of his affections. At last, however, intelligence arrived which caused both to Reginald and Cyril the most intense anxiety. The good old minister, it appeared, had been taken alarmingly ill, and his life was despaired of.

"What is to be done now?" said Reginald, handing the letter to his cousin. "While she had a home in the manse I could leave her with an easy mind; but whither can she go after the death of her grandfather? This sort of delusion cannot be continued, Cyril,—I must tell all; and though my mother is changed towards me, it may be best to make her the channel of communication with my father."

"If you say one word on the subject, Reginald, you ruin yourself, and me, and Isabel. We must fall upon some means of providing a home for her a little while longer. I will go to Scotland immediately, and, by pretending to Monro that she is my wife, prevail upon him to watch over and protect her. Besides, she has aunt Mysie, you know,—an excellent creature in her way, though not quite presentable at Morley."

Reginald's principles were too correct not to shrink a little from the proposed arrangement. He had not scrupled to conceal his own marriage with Isabel; but the idea of permitting another, even though that other was Cyril, to

appear in the light of her husband, wounded his sense of delicacy. He hesitated, and then said that he feared the plan would not answer.

"If we must carry on the cheat for any time longer, it were best to give to Monro an undivided confidence. Let him be aware that Isabel is my wife, and he will doubtless deal as fairly by her as if he were led to suppose that she was yours."

"You are not jealous, Reginald?" said Cyril with a sort of half sneer, which he was unable at all times to repress.

"Of whom?" demanded Reginald, somewhat moved.

"Pooh, pooh! of no one: I was only joking —But, seriously, I fear your device won't answer. Monro will feel in your case that he has been ill-used, and is not unlikely to revenge himself by making a premature disclosure: whereas, if he is taught to look upon me as the culprit, he will probably do his best to aid us in our difficulties. Still, I am quite ready to act in any way you may desire."

I have spoken of Reginald throughout as of one, the good qualities of whose heart were far more conspicuous than the strength of his judgment. He was never a match for his cousin in argument; and, on the present occasion, the same result took place that had invariably occurred

as often as they chanced to differ in opinion. Cyril's views of the manner in which it behoved them to deal with existing difficulties prevailed. It was agreed that each should contribute a portion from the allowance made to them by Sir Charles towards the maintenance of Isabel and her aunt; and that Cyril, under the pretext of spending a few days in London, should set out for Scotland on the morrow. All other arrangements were, moreover, committed to him. He was to be guided by her wishes in the choice of a residence; he was to explain to her as much as he might deem prudent, of the extreme delicacy of the position in which his cousin stood; and, finally, to make her aware of the unalterable affection with which she continued to be regarded. "And, above all, Cyril, do not neglect to assure her that I have made up my mind as to the necessity of terminating this state of suspense with as little delay as possible. Tell her that no considerations of prudence or duty shall hinder me from openly claiming her as mine before the year shall expire. You may describe to her how wretched I am,—how my very health gives way under the pains of separation. But, above all, mark well how she bears up. If anxiety be making any inroad on her constitution, then, let come what will, I go to her on the instant."

Cyril promised to attend rigidly to the instructions which he had received, and to use all possible skill in leading Isabel into a cheerful acquiescence with the plans proposed by her husband. He then withdrew, as if to prepare for his journey; but being met on the landing-place by Sir Charles, followed the latter, at his particular desire, into his dressing-room. They remained shut up together for a full hour, at the termination of which Cyril proceeded to his own apartment, and was not seen again by any member of the family till dinner-time. It was during the progress of the meal that he intimated, as if by chance, his intention of visiting London. But no questions were put to him touching the nature of the business that carried him there; and when it was found next morning that he had actually gone, nobody expressed surprise. Yet was his absence felt by one member of the family as a grievous calamity. Reginald was now without one friend to whom, let happen what might, he could open his mind. The means, too, of exchanging communications with Isabel were cut off: for though he could write as freely as ever, it had been settled that Isabel should not answer his letters till Cyril returned. In every point of view, therefore, his situation was so irksome, that the effects of

anxiety became more and more visible in him every day.

Such was Reginald's state both of body and mind, when, on the fourth day after Cyril's departure, a gentle tap at the door of his room gave notice that some one required admission. He answered it by desiring the party to walk in; and Mrs. Daller, his old nurse, with whom, by some accident or another, he had never conversed in private since his return from the North, entered. She closed the door cautiously after her, and approached him.

"You are ill and you are anxious, Mr. Reginald," said she; "and others are anxious about you. Why all this mystery and concealment? Why is Mr. Cyril so constantly with your father, where you ought to be? And why should he go to Scotland on business that concerns other people?"

"Good God! Mrs. Daller, who told you Cyril had gone to Scotland?"

"Have I neither eyes nor ears? Do you think I have not seen and heard more than, maybe, I was intended to see and hear. Oh, Mr. Reginald, your mother's heart is as warm to you as ever! Go and tell her all. She will help you out of your distresses, if it be possible to do so; and if not, she will tell you how to bear them."

"Would to God I had done so from the first!" exclaimed Reginald bitterly: "for the disclosure must come sooner or later; and why not in the beginning as well as in the end?"

"And that is true indeed" continued she: "therefore go, my dear child—go now while she is alone. Your father is out, and is not expected to return for some time. You will find your lady mother in the drawing-room. Go and make a clear breast at once."

Reginald prepared to follow the admonitions of his kind-hearted nurse, and was hurrying down stairs for the purpose, when the voice of Sir Charles calling to him from the landing-place arrested his steps. It was his father's wish that he should accompany him in a ride to Truro, and Reginald could not refuse to comply. Accordingly, instead of seeking the drawing-room, he turned his steps towards the stable; and an opportunity of confiding his griefs to a bosom which would have felt for, and rightly dealt with them was lost,—and, taking inclination on his part into account, it never came again.

CHAPTER X.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH.

When Cyril Trevenean quitted Morley, he gave out that the period of his absence would not exceed a fortnight. A full month expired ere he returned. During that interval he had written twice to Reginald; taking care, however, to express himself with so much caution, that had the letters fallen into other hands than those for whom they were intended, no harm could have arisen. He stated, indeed, as a piece of news in which his cousin was likely to take some interest, that the good old minister at Loch Moideart was dead, and that his granddaughter and sister-in-law were removed to Glasgow. With respect, again, to their old tutor, he, it appeared, was wavering as to the plan of life which he should permanently follow; whether to go into the Scotch Church, or turn his attention to the law. But, in the mean while, he also had established himself in Glas-

gow, where he took private pupils, and attended lectures on chemistry, ecclesiastical law, and divinity.

From all this Reginald was enabled to collect that Isabel had chosen Glasgow as the place of her new abode, and that Mr. Monro had agreed to protect her there. So far his doubts and anxieties were allayed, and he strove to assure himself that things were in as good a train as the untoward circumstances by which he was encumbered would allow.

Throughout the whole of that long and dreary month Reginald had not received a single line from Isabel. Though he had consented to endure this state of things when Cyril quitted him, still, as he had done so under the idea that the privation would endure only for a couple of weeks at the longest, its continuance during twice that space wounded him deeply. Not that distrust of any human being entered into his mind; he believed, on the contrary, that Isabel was, like himself, unchangable, and that Cyril was doing all that could be done to render his condition easy; yet an intense anxiety touching the future, together with a consciousness that he had not acted generously in times past, ate into his soul, and began seriously to affect his health. His step was no longer light and buoyant, and his cheek

became as pallid as it used to be in early life. Nor did the altered condition of his appearance fail to attract the attention of those about him. His mother's eye would follow him, as he glided about, with a tenderness of expression which she vainly strove to conceal; and even his father's manner became softened by the contemplation of his distress. Yet they equally shunned coming with him to any explanation, or questioning him as to the causes of his dejection. The consequence was, that when Cyril did return, even he expressed himself shocked at the change in his cousin's appearance;—a natural movement which not even the recollection that by such means alone must his own ends be accomplished could immediately control.

Cyril brought with him, what was of infinitely more value to Reginald than all the medicine in the world—a long and delightful letter from Isabel, in which she expressed herself in the warmest terms of his cousin's kindness, and very contentedly of the situation in which he had placed her. She spoke, indeed, with natural sorrow at the decease of her kind old grandfather, and did not disguise the reluctance which she felt to quit the scenes of her youth; yet there was a resignation, almost a cheerfulness, in the tone of the letter, which

excited in him scarcely less of surprise than of satisfaction. She said, for example, that Cyril had convinced her how necessary it was for his peace that she should submit for some time longer to the pain of a separation. "And the knowledge of that fact," continued she, "makes even this sad state of widowhood endurable. Neither will I add, what my own heart assures me is uncalled for, the expression of a hope that you will think of me as of one having no wish, no desire, except to promote your welfare. Do not, therefore, place yourself in opposition to your father by making any premature disclosure. I can never be unhappy so long as I feel that your interests are advanced at the expense of a little personal suffering on my part."

Reginald was cheered by the perusal of this letter, and for a day or two both his manner and appearance indicated as much: but the poison had entered into his system, and he soon relapsed again. His father became at length alarmed.

"I have been watching you for some time, Reginald," said he one morning, when, either by chance or design, they found themselves sauntering together through the park; "and I do believe you are seriously ill. Surely the

affair of Lady Julia does not prey upon your spirits?"

"I have not thought much of it since you were so good as to drop the subject, sir," replied Reginald.

"That's right, very right. No doubt I had set my heart on the match, and am still most reluctant to consider it as done with; but it is quite clear you are not in a condition to marry any one at present. What do you think? Would a tour on the Continent, or a year's sojourn in the mild climate of the Mediterranean, be of use to you? My opinion is that it would: and who knows, but that, on your return, you might view things in a different light, and become, what we once hoped you would be, a source of real comfort to your mother and myself."

Reginald's heart swelled within him. He would have opened out the innermost thoughts of his mind, indeed, and made a full disclosure; had not the recollection that such a proceeding would compromise more than himself restrained him. He therefore confined his reply to a general expression of thanks for his father's kindness, and a sort of vague concurrence in the proposed tour. At the same time he had no wish to quit England before the

beginning of winter. The climate of Morley during autumn was sufficiently mild; and as he had had no pheasant-shooting for a couple of seasons, he was anxious to ascertain whether he had entirely forgotten how to use a gun in cover. Now as Sir Charles had lost nothing of his own passion for field-sports, such an avowal on his son's part produced the best effect. He was extremely glad to find that Reginald had still something of the man about him, and certainly would not urge him to forego a pleasure in itself so rational.

The consequences of this apparently important conference were to place Reginald on a much more agreeable footing towards the rest of the family than he had occupied for some time. He was no longer regarded with an eye of suspicion, and had things gone on smoothly elsewhere, he would have been comparatively happy: but this was not the case. For about a month after Cyril's return from Scotland, Isabel continued to write as she had ever done: at the end of that period her letters began to arrive less frequently, and to breathe a more constrained spirit. At first he endeavoured to account for the circumstance by conjuring up one or other of the many reasons by the help of which men are accustomed to obscure their own judgment on matters which they are not

willing to try fairly. But finding this resource fail, he had at last recourse to Cyril, into whose hands he put a short note. It did not contain any direct complaint of want of attention on his part, but breathed a spirit concerning which he was at a loss to determine whether he ought to regard it as that of indifference or dejection. Cyril read the letter, and returned it with a slight shrug of the shoulders.

"What does that movement mean?" demanded Reginald.

"Oh, nothing,—or, at least, next to nothing. Isabel was very young when you married her. She had never seen the world, and therefore I find very little in the tone even of that letter to excite surprise."

"What!" cried Reginald, "is it not essentially different from the style in which she used to write?"

"I admit the fact. But remember that Isabel is now the inhabitant of a great town. When she first began to correspond with you, her list of acquaintances went not beyond the circle of her own family: probably it is greatly enlarged by this time, and her leisure is of course curtailed in proportion."

"I don't understand you, Cyril. You cannot mean to insinuate——"

"My dear fellow, I never deal in insinu-

ations. My sole meaning is, that you and Isabel, being both very young and very inexperienced, did a particularly imprudent thing in forming the connexion that subsists between you. It was next to impossible that the one or the other should not repent,—particularly under such circumstances as yours."

"Am I to understand by this," cried Reginald with much emotion, "that you suspect Isabel of having cooled in her affections?"

"Upon my honour, Reginald, your question is scarcely a fair one. I have no right to suspect anything: but a man must be blind if he fail to perceive that this is not the letter of a doting bride."

There was no opportunity then to continue the conversation further, inasmuch as Cyril was required to attend his uncle; and the cousins were not again thrown together during the remainder of the day. But the arrow which the one had shot with so much skill, and so little regard to the peace of mind of the other, flew unerringly to its mark and rankled in the wound. Reginald pondered over all that had passed between them with an intensity such as language has no power to describe. Was it possible that a sojourn of a few short months, amid new scenes and new faces, could have so completely changed the character of Isabel;

or had he mistaken that character from the first? She was very young, it was true; but she was likewise very artless,—at least, he had always thought so: and of the warmth and sincerity of her devotion she had given the best proofs. No, no, there must be some other cause for this change in her style of writing. At all events, he would not come to any rash conclusion: he would write to her, and desire an explanation.

He did write, and he counted the hours that must necessarily intervene ere an answer could be received. They ran their course, but brought with them no reply to his inquiries. He waited another day, and another; and still the receipt of his long and distressing letter was not acknowledged. Again he had recourse to Cyril, who only shook his head, and hoped that things might not be taking any violent turn. "But if it were so, Reginald, for my part I don't see what cause you would have to regret it. A woman so fickle,—if, indeed, she prove such,—is not a prize for the loss of which it would become you to break your heart. Nay, I see many excellent reasons why the thing is to be desired rather than otherwise."

"You forget, Cyril, the length to which the matter has proceeded. To believe Isabel

fickle, would be bad enough were we at liberty to break off the connexion: but to find her as a wife untrue, by heavens! it would drive me mad!"

"Why so?" demanded Cyril. "Supposing her to prove false,—though of that we have no proof,—you are very sure that she will never think of prosecuting the legal claim that she has upon you; and if she did, you would find no difficulty in effecting a divorce,—that is, provided things have gone as far as I am afraid they have done."

"Good God! what can you mean?" exclaimed Reginald in extreme agitation.

"I assure you that I have no meaning," replied Cyril, as if alarmed by the vehemence of his cousin's manner.

"No meaning, Cyril! no meaning! and yet you speak as if you possessed a perfect knowledge of Isabel's unworthiness!"

"I did not say so, did I?" answered Cyril. "I am sure that it was not my intention to do anything of the sort. Isabel may be as pure as an angel, for aught I know to the contrary; but——"

"In the name of all that is sacred, why do you make these pauses? If you do know anything, speak out. I have strength enough of mind to endure the worst;—nay, it will relieve

me of a load which I have not strength to bear much longer, to be assured of almost any issue."

"Then, my dear fellow, I will speak out," replied Cyril. "Know that the letters which I have received from Monro have not of late been satisfactory. He describes Isabel as much changed for the worse. When they first came to Glasgow, she affected great privacy, — so much so, indeed, as to alarm him; for her constitution, naturally delicate, appeared to suffer from the effects of confinement and anxiety. He then considered it his duty to draw her out, and to introduce her to certain excellent persons with whom he is himself accustomed to associate. At the house of one of these she met, it appears, a young officer,—a Mr. Lorimer, I think the name is,—belonging to one of the regiments in garrison, between whom and herself an acquaintance began, which has gradually ripened into intimacy. At first, Monro, who is not very observant in such matters, saw nothing to alarm him in all this: nor was it till the lady of the house joked him on the impression which his young *protégée* had made, that he thought of watching her movements at all closely. But when he did open his eyes, he saw enough to alarm him.

He spoke to her on the subject, and she only ridiculed his fears. He hinted to her that he was aware of circumstances which rendered extreme caution on her part necessary. At this the lady fired up, and told him plainly that she was her own mistress, and would not be dictated to by him or any one as to the line of conduct which she might be disposed to pursue. Still, he brings no accusation of guilt against her; his charge goes no farther than levity, as you may perceive if you read the concluding paragraph of his letter.

Reginald seized the paper with a trembling hand, and read, at the place which his cousin pointed out to him, as follows:—

"It is indeed very distressing to be obliged to communicate intelligence which must, I am afraid, occasion great pain to him who receives it: but the pledge which I gave you at parting requires that on this subject I should practise no reserve. I am afraid that you have been deceived in this girl. Whether or not she be a guilty creature, I will not take it upon me to say; but you shall know exactly what befel since I last communicated with you, and must yourself judge of the measures which it may be wise to adopt.

"In spite of my earnest remonstrances, she

has not only refused to drop Mr. Lorimer's acquaintance, but has thrown herself in his way more frequently than ever;—nay, I have been able to trace the interchange of *billets-doux* between them; and once or twice she has received visits from him at her own lodgings. Now I have no right to assume that these visits are for other than the purest purposes; but if she be married, they are, to say the least of it, very unbecoming. My great hope is, that so far you may have deceived me, and that no tie more binding than an engagement is between you."

Reginald gasped for breath. He returned the letter to Cyril, threw himself in a chair, and buried his face in his hands.

"The thing must not rest here, Cyril," cried he at length; "I will sift it to the bottom. I will set off for Glasgow immediately, be the consequences what they may."

"You had better not, Reginald," replied the other. "Let things remain as they are at least a little longer; for if she be guilty, you will know it soon enough."

"I cannot know the worst too soon," exclaimed Reginald, starting up. "I will not even stop to say farewell to my father; I will go on the instant."

"I tell you that you need not go, Reginald: you would learn at Glasgow no more than I can state to you in this room. Isabel is gone;—she eloped with Mr. Lorimer the very day after the letter was written of which you have just read a portion. See, here are my proofs."

Cyril handed a second letter to his cousin which he had received that day. Like the former, it was from Monro, and it contained only two hurried lines.

"My worst apprehensions have been realized: Isabel is faithless. She and her paramour went off at an early hour this morning in a post-chaise, and as yet I have been unable to trace them. "Yours,

"D. Monro."

The letter dropped from Reginald's hand, and he became deadly pale. His breathing was suspended; he reeled, and would have fallen had not his cousin supported him to a seat. Cyril sat down beside him, and strove, by a thousand kind expressions, and all the arguments which good feeling usually dictates, to recall him to self-possession. "I have no real consolation to offer," continued he,—"none at least of which at this moment you can feel the

force: but the time will come, and quickly too, I trust, when your own good sense will suffice to assure you, that since such a blow was to fall, it could not have fallen at a better time. I pray you, Reginald, to look the evil in the face, and to determine what you desire to be done. Shall I undertake to search after the fugitive, or will you?"

"Neither the one nor the other," cried Reginald, using a great exertion and recovering the command over himself. "So light a wanton is not worth pursuing—so faithless a woman is not deserving of a moment's thought; let her go her own way. So soon, so very soon—not yet twelve months parted! Gracious powers! who could have thought it? And she so artless, as it seemed,—so confiding, so candid! O, Cyril, that I had followed your advice, and withdrawn myself ere that fatal knot was tied! O that I had sooner intrusted you with the state of my own feelings! and then perhaps all might have been avoided."

"It is no use, my dear fellow, to lament the past," said Cyril kindly: "the great matter is to consider how we shall use the future. Now I am not without hopes that this may be a marriage jaunt after all; in which case, as the bride will not be forward to publish her own dis-

grace, we can easily let the matter rest where it is. You will not claim her—she will not claim you, and aunt Mysie having very little interest in the matter of your unlucky scrape, there will be no evidence to show that a marriage has taken place at all. However, this, I am afraid, is not the time for leading you into a dispassionate consideration of your own circumstances. The shock must be got over first, the agony of grief diminished; and there is no means so effectual for that purpose as change of scene. What say you, shall we act upon your father's hint and set out for the Continent?"

"For any place and at any moment you choose," exclaimed Reginald bitterly: "to me all places are alike, all countries the same.—So young, so beautiful, so gentle, yet so false!"

Cyril quitted his cousin's apartment while the latter was thus giving vent to his feelings, and was shut up, perhaps a quarter of an hour, with Sir Charles. When he came forth again, it was to direct immediate preparations to be made for his own and his cousin's departure. As it would be necessary for the travellers to remain a couple of days in London, whither the heavy baggage could be forwarded, these were completed so soon, that the carriage made its appearance at the hall within an hour of the moment when the project was first started. But

in Reginald neither the extraordinary rapidity of the whole proceeding, nor the calm and prepared manner in which his father and mother took leave of him, produced the smallest effect. He went through the process of bidding them farewell, as it were, mechanically; and he was still lost amid the mazes of his own maddening reflections long after Morley, with its woods and hills were out of sight.

CHAPTER XI.

FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.

The halt of the relatives in London did not exceed the period that was absolutely required for completing their arrangements. Their sojourn on the Continent covered a space of something more than twelve months. It is but just to state, moreover, that they made the most of it. Carrying with them credentials of the best kind, and having an ample command of money, they found no difficulty in obtaining an introduction to the best society in all the capitals of Europe, amid the gaities of which Reginald gradually recovered both his health and his spirits, which were neither of them at any time wanting to his cousin. It is true that, from time to time, his thoughts reverted to the quiet manse of Loch Moideart, and to the happy days that he had spent there; and that the memory of these days invariably brought back a fit of despondency, which it was Cyril's especial busi-

ness to put to flight. But, as time ran on, even these attacks became less and less frequent, till, towards the close of the year, they had almost ceased to return. Meanwhile his father, in the course of the correspondence which was carried on between them, returned to the subject of Lady Julia,—a topic, in the enforcement of which he found his nephew a willing ally; and though, at first, Reginald seemed as much averse to the arrangement as ever, even on that head his prejudices underwent a gradual change.

"Why should you persist in thwarting the governor, Reginald? Why not marry Lady Julia, and have done with it?" said Cyril.

"How can I, my dear fellow? Even if I had a heart to give, is my hand at my own disposal? That unhappy girl's crimes do not absolve me from vows deliberately uttered,—at least, till I have acknowledged her before the world, and before the world repudiated her."

"That is to say, you are willing to involve yourself and me and all your connexions in irretrievable disgrace and sorrow, rather than omit a matter of mere form, even while you yourself feel that it is no more than a form. I presume you scarcely intend to take to your bosom the cast-off mistress of Mr. Lorimer?"

"There was no necessity to make the allusion, Cyril."

"Well, well, I did not mean to wound you; but if you have made up your mind to live without her, and possess the best assurance that she will never seek to force herself upon you, why stir a subject which had much better be left to die of its own accord? I do think that you would act wisely if you were to consider the past as a mere dream."

"But suppose she were to assert her rights, how could I avoid bringing disgrace upon myself and upon all connected with me?"

"In the first place, there is no probability that she will ever venture to do that; because, according to Monro's account, she is either married to this Lorimer, or lives with him as if she were. In the next place, there will be no difficulty whatever in suppressing every evidence of a marriage which was performed so secretly and so irregularly as yours."

"How so, Cyril? Was not aunt Mysie present on the occasion, and was not the certificate intrusted to her keeping?"

"Very true: but aunt Mysie's bare assertion, unsupported by that certificate, would go for little in a court before which I should be prepared to state, upon oath, that to my knowledge nothing of the sort took place; and I

think that there is no certificate by this time in aunt Mysie's possession."

"Why, Cyril, you would not, if called upon to give evidence, deny that you were yourself present at this unfortunate marriage?"

"Why not, good coz? I admit that not for every one would I tell a lie so palpable: but he who can sacrifice a friend when a trifling deviation from truth would save him, is one on whose regard I, at least, would put but small value."

Reginald was shocked. Evasion, deceit, concealment, he had himself practised: neither would he have shrunk from the contemplation of something more than these, had it been moderately disguised. But so daring a confession of faith, or, to speak more accurately, of the absence of all trust-worthiness, struck discordantly upon his moral sense. Nay, it did more: it excited for the moment an extraordinary and unaccountable distrust of the man who had ventured to make it. To be sure, the misgiving took no particular turn; indeed, the doubter was at a loss for ground on which to rest his suspicions. But he did suspect something, and the coldness of his reply betrayed him.

"I should be sorry to see you in such a position, Cyril."

"Pooh! pooh!" replied the other, quick as thought in detecting the error of which he had been guilty; "you don't suppose that I mean what I say? No; I used that particular form of speech only to assure you that I, at least, entertained no apprehension that the question would ever be brought to issue. For aunt Mysie cannot suppose that I would countenance her in carrying on a conspiracy against you; and if she be base enough to attempt it, then it is fair to conclude that she must have a very mean opinion of human nature in general, and of your humble servant in particular. She would thus, in all probability, come to the conclusion, that my views lying directly opposed to hers, I would swear one thing just as readily as she would swear another."

Reginald was scarcely satisfied with this explanation, and did not therefore pursue the subject further. His cousin also appeared for the time to have had enough of it. But when letters from England referred to it again, and of these some came from his mother, Reginald was not sufficiently master of himself to abstain from resuming it. At the next discussion Cyril took a more serious tone. He was now the doubter; and feared that, guilty as the woman was, she could not be cast aside without a formal trial. Yet he wished it were other-

wise; for such a trial must lead to disclosures which could not fail of ruining him, and would probably end in the defeat of the very negotiation which it was Sir Charles's object to carry forward.

It is said that all men are perverse on some subject or other: it is certain that there are very few tempers which do not become soured by opposition. On the present occasion, Reginald, so far from yielding to his cousin's view of the case, began to fight against it lustily, till he drove the other into an admission that, in a moral point of view, it signified very little whether a contract already vitiated, and so far virtually annulled, were formally set aside by decree of court or not. To pass from this to a consideration of prudential motives, was both easy and natural. But why dwell upon such topics? Enough is done when I state, that Reginald gave in due time his assent to the treaty which his father had negotiated; that he wrote to Lady Julia, avowing his passion; that he received from her such an answer as he had every reason to expect; and that early in the winter he and Cyril set out from Paris, for the purpose of fulfilling the agreement. Neither is it necessary to detail at length how they travelled, or what befel them at the close of their journey. They reached London in safety:

they were received with every demonstration of affection by their relatives; by Lord Templetown and his daughter with marked respect. Finally, the preparations for the wedding being hurried forward, the day was fixed, and the most ardent desire that Sir Charles Trevenean had ever cherished seemed on the eve of receiving its accomplishment.

Was Reginald at ease during the progress of these preparations? Was he satisfied with his present condition? Did he look back upon the past with a quiet conscience; did he anticipate the future unmoved? Very far from it. He had yielded to the wishes of those about him, at first, from a sort of conviction that all states would henceforth be the same to him; at last, from a persevering endeavour on his own part to assure himself that, by indulging the dreams of youthful fancy, he had frittered away his best chances of success in life. For Lady Julia he entertained no passion; yet he had learned not to dislike her; and the idea of obtaining through her such an increase of influence as might enable him to play a prominent part in public! even Reginald's mind, diffident and retiring as it was, could not be wholly insensible to such a consideration. For this was the chord which his father by letter, and Cyril in their personal communications, had constantly

struck, till the plastic disposition of the party assailed took at length the wished-for form. Yet there broke in from time to time upon the visions of power and patronage which it was the business of his counsellors to rouse and keep in force, a bitter pang of remorse and self-upbraiding. What right had he to entangle so young a creature into the closest of all connexions with himself, and then leave her exposed to the inconveniences and temptations which her deserted condition could not fail to bring around her. No doubt she had wronged him—and wronged him in a way that could admit of no reparation. Still he felt that he was himself far from blameless; and the nearer the hour approached which was to place between them a bar of eternal separation, the more sharp were the reproofs that conscience gave him. In a word, Reginald, now that he had committed himself beyond the chance of recovery, began to repent deeply of his own rashness, though he strove to spare the feelings, especially of his mother, by hiding as much as possible the workings of his own.

The negotiating families were both in London; the lawyers had been called in; settlements, contracts of marriage, &c. wanted only the signatures of the parties interested, and the wedding-day was fixed. An interval of less

than a week, indeed, was all that intervened between Reginald and the possession of Lady Julia's hand, when an accident befel that gave to the whole of his fortunes a revolution as complete as it was unexpected. He was proceeding through Covent-garden market towards Lincoln's-inn, when there passed him, outside the pillars of the Piazza, two individuals, of whose identity it was not till he had rubbed his eyes and examined them again that he became fully convinced. They were walking in the same direction with himself, and appeared so deeply immersed in conversation as to be insensible, to external objects. Now, he had been assured by Cyril only a few hours previously that Mr. Monro was still in Glasgow; and that aunt Mysie, as if ashamed of the part which her grandniece had played, was gone back to her seclusion in the Highlands. Yet, if ever the sense of sight spoke true, he had before him convincing proofs that they were both of them in London. Reginald's heart sank within him. He was utterly at a loss what to think; and though he quickened his pace so as to keep the objects of his curiosity in view, it was done rather instinctively than by design. Still, when he found himself amid a crowd of foot-passengers close upon the heels of this strange apparition, there arose within him an unaccountable

disposition to watch their movements, keeping himself unseen. They made for Drury lane, crossed it, and turned down by Queen-street. He followed, not however without taking the precaution to throw the folds of his cloak over the lower part of his face; while, by keeping on the opposite side of the way, he contrived as much as possible to escape all risk of particular observation. In this manner he tracked them towards the covered passage which communicates between Queen-street and Lincoln's-inn-fields; when, observing them to stop just under the archway, he made a bold push to learn something of the subject matter of their discourse.

Reginald walked quickly forward, and passed by the narrow footway to the right. The movement brought him close to the persons whom he had been following, and thoroughly satisfied him of their identity. Neither did it expose him to the slightest risk of detection: for though they both looked up for an instant, it was with the vacant stare of people whose minds are too much occupied with thoughts that bear upon themselves, to pay much heed to what may be going on around them. As may be imagined, the expression of deep and painful anxiety which their countenances displayed, rendered him only the more eager to discover its cause. The temptation to become

an eaves-dropper was irresistible. The situation of the place peculiarly favoured him; so he stopped, as soon as a pillar fairly screened him, and listened.

"It's nae use saying another word on that subject," aunt Mysie was pronouncing, "till ye tell me whats become o' the lassie hersel'. I hae nae authority to lat the document out o' my ain hands without her consent; and till I hae seen her, and gotten instructions frae her ain lips, neither threats nor fleeching sal wyle it frae me."

"Good God! what have I done?" replied Mr. Monro, "that I should have become an object of suspicion to you? Have I not assured you, on my honour, that I am ignorant of her place of abode, — that it is for the purpose of compelling him to do her justice that I require the certificate,—that, by throwing these impediments in my way, you are only protracting the poor girl's sufferings, and hindering me from fulfilling my engagements with yourself? If you had sent the document by post, as I desired, instead of taking this unnecessary journey in person, the whole affair might have been arranged long ago."

"Look ye, Maister Monro," was the answer, "it's lang since I gave up a thought o' the engagement wi' mysel' whereof ye are pleased

to mak mention. It 's lang since I hae learned to regard the contracting thereanent as ane o' the maist daft-like actions o' my life; and, to be plain wi' you, it 's lang since I hae seen through the mask o' hypocrisy with which ye were able at times to cover your baseness. Ever since ye lent yoursel' to the schemes o' that atrocious villain Ceeril, I hae seen through you; and naething but the consciousness of our want of power—twa freendless and unprotected females—to contend against the wealth and the influence of such a heartless generation, wad hae keepet me quiet. But I 'm no' gain' to be bamboozled ony langer. I require ye to tell me where ye hae placed the girl, or I 'll proclaim your villany to the first weel-dressed man I meet in the street, and see whether I canna get him to plead for me."

A dark and ironical smile passed over the features of Monro as he besought his companion to moderate her fury.

"If all that you insinuate were true, my dear Miss Macwhapple, only think how helpless—how perfectly helpless, is your situation! Here you are, an entire stranger in a great city, where people are all too much occupied with affairs of their own to pay the slightest regard to the tales of chance passengers. God help you! if you were to make your complaint to the Lord

Mayor in the middle of the street, he would treat you as a crazy person, and walk on. But your insinuations are quite groundless, — and you know that they are. If I interfered to make up matters between Cyril and your niece, I did so for the sake of Isabel;—nay, and you yourself admitted, at the time, that I had judged wisely. And as to the removal of the girl, was it not at her own desire, and with your full approbation?"

"No matter whether it was or was not. The fact that I maun be made acquainted with now is—where is she? Tell me that, or I'll find ways and means to compel you."

"Upon my honour I do not know; and, what is more, I never shall know; unless, by showing that certificate in the proper quarter, I am put in a situation to require the interference of the law in her favour."

"And what for should not I show the document mysel'?" demanded aunt Mysie.

"Because you are ignorant to whom it ought to be shown."

"And what for suld I be ignorant? why suld not you tak awa my ignorance?"

"Nay, that would be putting the affair entirely into your hands. Now, as I don't conceal from you that I have certain ends of my own to serve, I choose to play the first fiddle

in getting your niece's wrongs redressed. However, if you prefer that matters should continue as they are, I cannot help it."

"Base, bad man!—wha ever doubted that ye had ends o' your ain to serve? But things shall not rest as they are. The document shall be produced; and ye may be the ane to produce it: but it shall be done in my presence."

"Oh, I don't object to that. Pray give it me, then: and when I have arranged matters as to the most convenient time and place for using it, you shall be informed."

"Do ye tak me for a simpleton athegether?" demanded aunt Mysie. "What! give you up the certificate, and trust to your assurances for what sal follow? I am no' sic a fool as that comes to, neither!"

"Well, then, come with me now: or, stay—I had better go and put things in a train; and to-morrow, or to-night if you like it better, we can go together and make use of the deed."

"The sooner the better," replied aunt Mysie. "The puir lassie has been owr lang out o' sight and out o' hearing already; it sal na be my faut if she be keepet sae beyond to-morrow. I'se be ready to accompany ye on this errand at ony hour ye choose to name."

"Well, then, suppose we say nine to-night?"

"With a' my heart. But where are we to meet? Will ye ca' for me?"

"No, I think not. You can find your way thus far, I dare say. It's no great distance from your lodging; just through Turn-stile passage, and across the square."

"I 'll no' fail you, depend upon it."

As she uttered these words, aunt Mysie fell off from her companion, without, however, condescending by voice or motion to say God speed. On the contrary, she walked abruptly away through Lincoln's-inn-fields; while Monro, retracing his steps along Queen-street, left Reginald mute and motionless as a statue in the spot where he had ensconced himself.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTRETEMPS.

THE effect produced upon Reginald's mind by the conversation to which he had been an ear-witness was of such a nature as, in after years, to astonish himself. There broke in upon him all at once a light of which the brilliancy was never for a moment obscured. He received an impression that the foulest play had been used in reference both to Isabel and himself, and that those on whom he bestowed his confidence had betrayed it. A thousand circumstances, disregarded at the moment, now rose into his memory, every one of which served as a link by which to connect one event with another. Yet there was a mystery which he could not penetrate—a problem which he could not solve;—namely, why so much pains should have been taken to involve in utter misery persons who had never wronged the persecutors. Was Cyril also implicated?—nay, was he not a chief mover in the plot?

"I cannot answer these questions!" exclaimed he aloud, "I am utterly confounded. Yet I have great cause to thank Providence, which has brought me, by means so mysterious, to a knowledge of circumstances which, if they be judiciously followed up, will doubtless throw light upon the whole intrigue. How shall I act?"

Reginald, having pondered for a moment, came to the judicious conclusion that the present was an affair which could not be rightly dealt with except through the instrumentality of the police. He trusted, moreover, that he should find the magistrate disposed to act with the secrecy, as well as promptitude, which the case seemed to require: and he was not mistaken. A private conference was freely granted to him; in which, after stating his name and rank, he received a ready assurance of all the aid which it might be in the power of the establishment to afford. "But," continued his worship, "I don't exactly see what it is that you apprehend. Is the woman's life or liberty in danger?—or have you cause to suspect him of any design against yourself?"

"I scarcely know to what my misgiving amounts," replied Reginald: "but if you could allow a trusty officer to attend with me at the place of meeting, and direct him to act, as far as

may be lawful, under my instructions, matters may be brought to light affecting the happiness, perhaps the life, of more than one person."

To this the magistrate, after a slight demur, assented; and Reginald, having seen the officer, and directed him when and where to meet him, returned home. He shut himself up, however, in his own room, being desirous, if possible, to avoid all intercourse with the rest of the family. But he was thwarted in that design: Cyril, it appeared, had inquired for him, and he could not refuse to see him.

"It will be satisfactory to you to know, Reginald," said he, having first cautiously shut the door, "that, by a letter which I received this morning from Monro, all doubt as to the fate of Isabel is removed. She is married—actually married to Mr. Lorimer, who has gone upon half-pay, and is now living with his false wife at Stonehaven, on the east coast of Scotland."

"Is Monro's letter of recent date?" asked Reginald carelessly.

"Written three days ago, as you may perceive," replied Cyril, handing him the letter.

Reginald looked at it, recognised the hand, saw that it bore date as usual, and returned it.

"This is explicit enough," said he. "If there had been room to doubt before, this

would have removed it. Has Monro ever been in London since we parted?"

"Not that I am aware of," replied Cyril; "and if he had, I think that I should have heard of it."

"And old aunt Mysie,—what can have become of her?"

"He has taken no notice of her in his recent communications. The last news he gave was, you may recollect, that she had returned, in mere shame, into the remote Highlands."

"Well, I suppose we shall soon cease to think or speak about these people at all: for my part, I am heartily tired of the subject."

Cyril looked at his cousin with an inquiring stare; for both the style and manner of his conversation were so entirely different from what they used to be, as to excite in him for the moment something more than idle curiosity. He could not, however, detect in the guarded expression of Reginald's countenance any other traces than those which weariness is apt to leave behind. He therefore concluded that his victim had become thoroughly deadened to remorse, and of course prepared to leap, without misgiving, into the snare that had been laid for him. He was too much of a politician, however, to rake up even the embers of expiring passion; so he changed the conversation,

by asking whether Reginald meant to dine at home.

"No," was the reply; "I dine abroad."

"With the Templetowns?"

"No."

"Well, well, my dear fellow, I have no wish to pry into your secrets; only remember that you are close upon your wedding-day. Lady Julia——"

"Will sustain no injury at my hands.—But I detain you from more agreeable occupations, and I wish to be alone."

Cyril instantly withdrew; and Reginald fancied that he observed as he went a flush of anger or chagrin, or some other uneasy passion, redden his cheek. Neither had he deceived himself. Cyril was uneasy,—so uneasy that he made up his mind to keep his cousin unremittingly in sight till the marriage ceremony should have been performed. For the guilty are always suspicious: the traitor is always apprehensive that, by some chance or another, his designs have been fathomed; and Cyril, though he could not discover the slightest ground of just alarm, feared that Reginald was at last beginning to suspect him. Why should he affect reserve on the subject of his proceedings that evening? And with what view were the questions put relative to Monro

and aunt Mysie? Was it possible? No, no, he was sure it was not. Still, it might be prudent to observe him narrowly; and he was determined not to lose sight of him. It appeared, however, that for once Cyril was not to be the master of his own devices. His uncle had business to transact in the city, which, requiring the signature of a witness, rendered it necessary that Cyril should accompany him; and ere they returned, it was time to dress for dinner. All, therefore, that remained for Cyril to do, was to give every possible encouragement to the conviction that his plans were too deeply laid and too well arranged to sustain at the hands of his cousin either detection or interruption.

Meanwhile Reginald, the prey alternately of hope and of fear,—of hope he knew not to what end pointing, of fear he could tell in what issue likely to terminate,—was counting the slow progress of the hours and minutes as they crept along. Never had their passage appeared so tardy before; and never, not even in midsummer, was daylight so slow in taking its departure. At last, however, the increasing darkness warned him that his period of suspense was drawing to a close. He opened a drawer, took from it a brace of pocket-pistols,

loaded them with ball, and thrust them into his bosom. This done, he threw his cloak round him, and walked abroad; but as the hands of the hall-clock pointed only to half-past five, leaving three hours and a half to the time of the converse, he determined to spend these hours in some coffee-room not far from the scene of action. With this view he proceeded to Green's; took his place in one of the most retired boxes, and ordered dinner. But it was not yet placed before him, when, happening to cast his eyes through a crevice in the curtain which separated his cell from the rest of the apartment, he saw the door open, and Cyril and Monro enter. They made towards the fireplace, at the farther extremity of which Reginald was sitting. What a situation was his at that moment! Should they observe him, then adieu to every chance of effecting, either now or hereafter, the discovery to which he looked forward: should they fail to notice him, then more might come of it. Reginald strove, not unsuccessfully, to stifle his own emotion, while, drawing himself gently along the bench, he planted himself in such an attitude that, being screened by the corner, he came almost in close contact with the intruders, by neither of whom was his

proximity in danger of being detected, unless they raised the curtain, or came into the same box. I need not add that he was all ear.

"On that head you alarm yourself very needlessly," said Monro in a half whisper. "It is quite impossible that he should harbour any suspicion. What, indeed, could he suspect? But I own that I have more serious apprehensions with respect to her."

"She might have been dangerous a week ago," was the reply; "but matters are, I trust, in the best train for drawing her sting also. You don't suppose he can have seen you by any chance about the streets?"

"I have no more apprehension of that than I have of the failure of my own arrangements. Not once have I ventured into any of the leading streets, nor is it my purpose to do so till the marriage is over: and then, you know, I can get tired of Glasgow, and remove southward."

"Why, then, should he have asked that question?"

"'Trifles light as air,' my dear friend, 'are to the jealous mind——' you know the rest. Was there anything unnatural in the question?"

"Perhaps not. But coming at such a moment, and being put with so peculiar an em-

phasis——Ah, you may smile as you please, but I am not satisfied."

"Really, Cyril, I did not think you had been so timid. What, man! hast forgot the old saying, 'Faint heart never won fair lady?'"

"And whither do you mean to convey the old one?"

"To the same place where the young one is bestowed: she could not be in safer or better hands."

"But won't there be a great risk in this? What if they were to meet?"

"They have no more chance of meeting there than if wide seas rolled between them. Leave all that to me."

"I believe I must—I know that I may; that is, unless good luck have deserted us at the very moment when of all others it is least her part to play false. Yet I find he is gone out, and that he has left no message as to the probable time of his return."

"What can that signify to us, Cyril? Upon my honour, it makes me sick to see all this foolish and unnecessary fidgeting. Can't the man have private engagements of his own as well as his neighbours?"

"So I should say if he were at all given to these things; but he is not."

"Pooh! pooh!—Do you mean to dine here? because I do."

"No, I must go home to dinner."

Here the conversation ended, and Reginald, who did not venture to look up, collected, as well from that circumstance, as from the noise of the outer door banging as if let suddenly loose from the hand, that Cyril was gone. Monro, however, remained; and then came the important point to be determined, where had he established himself? Reginald gently raised his curtain just so far as to give him an opportunity of glancing through the room, and ascertained, without in the slightest degree exposing himself, that Monro was opposite. He had taken his seat in a box which faced the fire, and which, as it was open on the side next to that where he himself was seated, left him in all his movements subject to observation. So far Reginald felt that fortune had befriended him: for now he could watch without being watched in turn, and, in the event of any untoward advance of the enemy, have time to place himself in an attitude to avoid recognition. But there was no necessity for practising this latter manœuvre. Monro, who evidently entertained no suspicion that the room contained a single individual to whom he was likely to be an object of curiosity, applied himself to the dinner which was

set before him with hearty good-will. He ate voraciously, drank his wine freely, read the newspaper, and conducted himself in every other respect as those are apt to do whose minds and circumstances are both easy; while the man against whose peace and honour he had long plotted was sending viands away almost untouched, and vainly striving to become reconciled to a state of suspense which could not now be prolonged beyond a definite period.

Thus wore the night; the rival actors in this strange by-play occupying the same stage, yet holding with one another no communication. At length Monro, after casting his eye towards the clock, called for his bill. It was delivered, minutely scrutinised, found fault with as exorbitant, and discharged. A brief pause ensued, during which he continued to read the newspaper, as if finishing some article which he had begun, and then raised his eye again towards the timepiece as it struck the half-hour after eight. As it tolled out, he rose, put on his great-coat, and quitted the coffee-room. "Now, then," thought Reginald to himself, "I may breathe freely." But he was still a great deal too anxious to act upon his own suggestion; so he too paid his bill and wrapped up. He sallied forth; hurried towards Lincoln's-inn-

fields, and saw the solitary figure of a man moving in the moonlight with a deliberate pace towards the termination of Queen-street. Reginald followed, keeping such an interval between them as might hinder the party dogged, should he chance to look back, from entertaining any suspicion. But he seemed quite impervious to every feeling of the kind: he moved on as before, till the shadow of the dark passage concealed him.

Reginald advanced towards the same part, but checked his forward progress, when he saw that the man occupied alone the mouth of the archway, and that he was standing as if to await the arrival of some companion. Instead of pushing through the passage, Reginald accordingly crossed it, and walked on as he would have done had it been his intention to penetrate into Holborn. But he did not quit the square; neither, indeed, had he reached the farther corner, ere the quick step of some one moving after him caught his attention, and he turned round.

"Hist!" said a voice, which Reginald immediately recognised as that of the officer.

"All right," was the reply. "Have you seen anything?"

"Such a man as you described standing alone in the gateway, but no woman. There is

a coach likewise drawn up hard by; and, observing that, I have taken it upon me to warn a cab to be in readiness."

"Well done," answered Reginald; "you have anticipated all my wishes. Now look out: it is by this route that the woman will approach—she comes from Great Turnstile."

"Then there she is!" said the officer, pointing to a female figure which moved deliberately along the paved road. "Stand back and let her pass, and then we will follow cautiously."

They did stand back; but the air and manner of the woman was that of one who seemed perfectly indifferent whether her movements were watched or not. She looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, but made direct towards the passage.

"Now let us after her," whispered the officer. "We came up singly; let us go down arm-in-arm, and make at once for our cab. I suppose you mean to follow them?"

"It is for that purpose I am here," replied Reginald. As he said this he put his arm through that of the officer, and they walked on. It was too dark within the archway to permit either party to recognise the features of the other. Not, therefore, by exercising the sense of sight could Reginald determine that he was on a right scent; but part of a sentence utter-

ed by the female as they passed her by, sufficed to assure him that the true game was afoot. He was therefore strongly tempted to slacken his pace, and might perhaps have done so, had not his companion, by a pressure of the hand, urged him forward. On therefore they went, passing a hackney-coach, which stood with the horses' heads facing Drury-lane, till they came in sight of a cab about a stone's-throw farther onward, which the driver was immediately instructed to face above in the same direction. The movement was yet in progress, when, looking back, they observed by the light of a lamp two figures issue from beneath the archway; —they moved towards the coach, they entered, and the door was shut on them.

"Do you see that coach, Bill?" said the officer to the cabman.

"Yes, sir."

"I will give you a sovereign to keep it in view. Wherever it goes, you go; wherever it stops, you stop; and on no account lose sight of it."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the fellow, drawing on one side, partly to permit his own fare to mount, partly to make room for the coach to pass him. "I 'll be arter him 'spose he drive to h—!" Nor did he boast of that which he was unable to perform. The coach crossed Drury-

lane through a line of vehicles; the cab kept close behind it. The coach traversed Covent-garden; bore away, by Henrietta-street and Chandos-street, towards St. Martin's-lane: still the cab was in its wake; and neither did the impediments presented by a pressure of carriages at Charing-cross, nor an unusual bustle in the Haymarket, separate the one from the other for an instant. And so it was throughout the whole extent of Piccadilly, till Hyde-park-corner was left behind, and the two machines, like a fugitive and pursuer, swept along Sloane-street into the King's-road.

"Where the devil can they be going?" whispered the officer: "they have brought us all the way to Chelsea."

"No matter," replied Reginald: "if they go to the world's end, we 'll follow."

And they did follow; passing the Military Asylum, leaving the Royal Hospital to the left, and eventually behind them. At last, however, when it appeared to Reginald that they would soon be beyond the utmost outskirts of London, the coach pulled up. It stopped in front of an iron railing, within which seemed to be a sort of shrubbery, at the further extremity of which was a house, apparently of moderate dimensions.

"We must give them the go-by here," whis-

pered the officer to the cabman; "but don't go beyond eye-shot."

The fellow obeyed, and they were themselves in the act of stopping, when they observed the coach-door opened, the steps let down, and heard the gate-bell ring with violence.

"By G—d!" exclaimed the officer to Reginald, "it is a madhouse!"

Reginald gasped for breath. "Was there ever such complicated and desperate villany?" said he. "But we must pursue them even into that den of misery."

"Come along then," cried the officer, "and be quick with it."

They sprang from the cab, hurried back, reached the gate just as the man who had admitted the first applicants was about to close it, and forced themselves, to his exceeding surprise, within the railing.

"What do you mean by that?" exclaimed the man.

"Nothing but what's right," replied the officer. "I'm Townsend the runner;—hold up your lantern, friend,—you know me;—and now be so good as give me the key of your gate. We have a little private business with the gentlefolks that you have just admitted, and we won't stand no nonsense."

The man appeared immediately to recognise both the features and voice of the officer. He delivered up his key without scruple, after locking the gate; and, leading the way, ushered Reginald and his companion into a parlour, on the table of which a candle was burning.

"We are right!—we are right!" cried Reginald, the moment his eye fell upon the countenance of Monro, now livid with terror. "There stands your prisoner; and here is one who will be able, I trust, to clear up a mystery which has gathered round me so fast that I scarce know whether I sleep or wake."

But he spoke to one whose senses appeared to have forsaken her; for aunt Mysie, instead of answering, uttered a loud shriek and fell back into a chair.

CHAPTER XIII.

RECONCILIATION.

"I BESEECH you to have mercy!" exclaimed Monro, shrinking in manifest alarm from the touch of the officer,—"I beseech you to have mercy, and I will tell you all."

"Speak out then, miscreant!" cried Reginald, forgetting, under the excitation of the moment, the respect with which he had been accustomed to treat his tutor. "Speak out, and hide nothing; for on your own candour depends the use that I will make of the power which you see that I possess: and, by heavens! if you trifle with me, you shall rue it!"

"I assure you that I am not to blame," continued Monro. "Cyril—your cousin Cyril—was the tempter! I am but his agent—in a bad cause I acknowledge; but only the agent."

"Man! if you expect any share of mercy at my hands, tell me all. Where is Isabel?"

"She is here—she is in this house; she has been in this house these ten months."

"Merciful powers!" cried Reginald. "By whom conveyed hither?"

"Alas! by me," replied Monro; "but indeed, indeed, even in that I was but the tool of another. The whole device was Cyril's; I never moved except by his instructions."

Reginald rang the bell furiously, and in an instant half-a-dozen persons, whom the extraordinary turn which things were taking had collected round the door of the apartment, burst in.

"Where is the lady whom this scoundrel put under your charge? I desire that you will conduct me to her without delay."

"I pray you, indulge the gentleman," exclaimed Monro, turning to an elderly man who had entered at the head of the group: "he is legally entitled to direct in this matter, and whatever he desires you will obey."

"Take care of your prisoner, officer," said Reginald, as he prepared to follow the person who stood forth as his guide.

"Trust me for that," was the laconic answer of one who seemed as perfectly at his ease while alone in such a situation, as if he had been beside the dock in his own office, and those committed to his custody, handcuffed and ironed.

"Ye 're no' gain' to leave me by mysel' in sic company!" cried aunt Mysie, now at length

restored to a consciousness of passing events. "Oh, tak me wi' you, Maister Trevenean, and dinna leave me wi' that monster and thae wild-looking folk!"

"Follow then, and keep close to me," cried Reginald, as he passed from the room under the guidance of the keeper.

"I assure you, sir," said the man as they ascended the stairs, "I am quite guiltless of any wrong, if such shall prove to have been committed upon the young person intrusted to my care. I received her under the sanction of a medical certificate, and by the desire of the gentleman below, who represented himself as her uncle. She has suffered no maltreatment here, nor any further restraint than her circumstances seemed to require."

Reginald made no reply, but followed his conductor, whom he repeatedly urged to increased speed. The man, however, seemed reluctant to act upon the suggestion, and again stopped.

"Upon my word as a Christian man," said he, "they told me she was at times violent in the extreme; that her delusion was an idea that she was the wife of a young English gentleman; and that, if I did not use great precautions, she would some day be found dead in her chamber. With this statement of facts before me, I should have been inexcusable had

I not placed her in such a situation as to render self-destruction physically impossible. But, believe me, she has had every comfort that could be afforded consistently with what I felt to be my duty."

"Lead on, sir, and show me the lady herself!" cried Reginald. "I don't come here to pry into the secrets of your establishment; but I do come to set an injured woman free."

"Well, sir," said the man, stopping in front of a low door, one of eight, of which there were four on each side of a long gallery, "I cannot after that declaration doubt that your intentions are as honourable as your conversation is gentlemanlike; and if you should chance to discover in the accommodation afforded to this young lady less of elegance than she may have been accustomed to, I am confident you will make such allowances as are due to an establishment of this description."

"Open the door! or, by heavens, I'll ——" Reginald spoke in a low tone and through his clenched teeth, while his hand involuntarily groped towards his bosom. But the keeper did not wait either for the conclusion of the sentence or the exhibition of any mortal argument. He applied his key to the lock, which leaped back with a heavy crash; and drawing the door towards him, the light from his candle streamed beyond it.

"Oh, spare me! spare me!" exclaimed a voice every tone of which sank into the heart of him that heard it. "Indeed, indeed I have been quiet: I have not uttered one sigh—I have not spoken one word since you left me. Have mercy to-night, and I will never complain again, do with me what you will."

"Monster! what means this!" cried Reginald as, snatching the candle from the keeper's hand, he sprang across the threshold. That bound carried him into a cell about eight feet in length by four and a half in breadth. There was no fireplace, nor any window except a grated skylight of a single pane. The furniture consisted simply of a truckle bedstead, on which, beneath a tattered coverlet, lay a female form, so wasted by sickness, so worn down by misery, that, had she not spoken, by Reginald she never could have been recognised. Nor, as he panted to draw breath in that close and fœtid atmosphere, did he experience the slightest surprise at the havoc which confinement had made in her. He smote his hand against his head, and staggering towards the wall, leaned on it for several moments ere he found strength or resolution to approach the bed.

"Oh, this is cruel! this is wanton cruelty!" cried the wretched creature, burying her head under the bed-clothes. "If I had raised my

voice beyond a whisper, I could have understood it; but to beat me to-night——"

"Brute! beast! miscreant!" shrieked Reginald, seizing the keeper by the throat and presenting a pistol at his head; "hast thou dared——"

"My God! what voice is that?" cried the prisoner, casting the coverlet from her, and making an effort to rise. "Reginald! Reginald! is it thou? thou thyself? Oh, come to me, come to me! do not mock me, as thou hast so often done in dreams! Speak, speak to me! speak again—let me hear that voice and die in listening to it."

In a moment Reginald was recalled to his self-command. He threw the keeper from him, and hastily replacing the weapon in his bosom, rushed to the bedside.

"I am here, Isabel—mine own Isabel! It is Reginald—it is I myself, come to set thee free and——"

But he never finished the sentence. Joy, surprise, the sudden revulsion from despair to hope, had proved too much for her feeble frame. She could not meet his embrace, but fell back on the paliasse in a faint.

"Beast!" cried Reginald to the keeper, "as you hope for mercy, bring help. What!" continued he, as he strove to lift her from her

wretched pallet, "chained down too! Gracious heavens! was ever barbarity like this?"

He turned as he spoke, and so fiercely were his passions roused, that, had the keeper been near, the probability is that his life would have paid the forfeit. Happily for himself, however, in the mean time, and eventually for Reginald, he had obeyed the first command of his visiter, and was already among his domestics, several of whom he despatched with proper cordials, and all other things necessary to the assistance of the invalid. When they rushed into the cell, Reginald, who had again grasped a pistol, sought eagerly for the man who had been his first guide. Not finding him, however, reason gradually returned, and he besought the attendants to deliver the poor victim from the fetters which, for whatever space of time they might have encircled her ankles, and the swollen state of the limbs gave proof that it was considerable, must have hindered her all the while from lying except in one position. Nor was there any occasion to employ threats for the purpose of rendering these persons tractable. They vied with one another in the display of every humane feeling: they unlocked the padlocks—they threw over the patient some articles of decent clothing—they poured ether down her throat, and eau-de-Co-

logne on her forehead and, hands; and, above all, they raised her from her pallet and carried her out to a room where the atmosphere was purer. The effect of the latter change was immediately seen: she opened her eyes, drew a long breath, and raised herself on her elbow.

"Was it a dream?" cried she: "was it but a dream, after all?"

"Dear, dear Bell!" exclaimed aunt Mysie, who, restrained partly by fear, partly by astonishment, had hitherto kept aloof, but who now ran forward and folded her niece in her arms,—"Oh, what a sight is this!"

"And you too, dear aunt!" replied Isabel, embracing her. "But where is Reginald? Was he not here an instant ago? Did I not see him,—did I not hear him speak?"

"You did, you did!" cried Reginald, unable any longer to restrain his impatience. A wild cry burst from her lips; she threw herself into his embrace, and for several moments there passed between them only the silent eloquence of deep and absorbing ecstasy.

To remove Isabel from the madhouse to a comfortable lodging, which Townsend, a man of extensive and ready knowledge, was in a condition to recommend, and to carry with them Monro as a prisoner, were acts which it required less than an hour to accomplish. How

Isabel bore as she did the fatigue of moving, was indeed long after a subject of surprise to herself: but, in wondering at the occurrence, she forgot that excitement compensates in all cases for the absence of bodily strength, and carries us through fatigues under which, in a more saturnine frame of mind, we should have sunk. Medical assistance, likewise, the best that could be procured on the instant, was called in; and Reginald, as a measure of prudence, was ordered to withdraw himself. He obeyed, not without indescribable reluctance: yet was he far from being unprofitably employed during his exile. Monro appeared before him, and, on receiving an assurance of pardon, at once gave up every document of which he was in possession, and effectually cleared poor Isabel from the charges that had been brought against her;—nay, he made a candid confession of the motives which had guided both Cyril and himself throughout the whole business; delivered over the promissory note, with the signature of the former attached; and put into his pupil's hands all the letters which his cousin had addressed to him in Scotland. Reginald listened to the tale and examined the proofs of its authenticity with feelings which it would defy the power of language to portray; and having taken the precaution to exact from the culprit

a written statement, and caused him to sign it in the presence of the medical man and Townsend, he permitted him to go at large.

"You have behaved with extraordinary clemency," said Monro, as he took up his hat to depart; "and to convince you that I am not indifferent to your kindness, I will enlighten you on another subject. Do you remember Emma Freeman?"

"Perfectly," replied Reginald; "she was imprudent, and died early."

"To be sure she did. And on whom, think you, rests the odium of her sin and death?"

"I never heard," answered Reginald.

"Why, then, I will tell you. Upon you! Cyril did the deed, and contrived to satisfy your father and others that you were guilty."

"The cold-blooded and unprincipled scoundrel! But will you swear to that?"

"Ay, and will add it freely to this confession."

As he said this, he seized his pen, and one sentence more, full of dark import, was appended to the document. But though Reginald experienced no ordinary satisfaction at being thus put in possession of evidence sufficient to set himself and his wife clear with the world, his abhorrence of Monro, as a partner in so foul a transaction, would not permit his holding with him any further communication:

he therefore motioned to him to quit the house, and the ex-tutor disappeared.

Of the effects produced by these discoveries on the fortunes of Reginald and Isabel, as well as on the views of Sir Charles and his noble friend Lord Templetown, a few words will suffice to give an account. When Reginald, who did not reach home till a late hour on the following day, told his tale in the presence only of his father and mother, the latter appeared like one awakened from a dream—the former sat utterly stupified.

"Surely the boy must have lost his senses. The story was from beginning to end so extraordinary—the facts which it sought to establish so incredible, that he could not be expected to take the word even of his son in confirmation of it."

Luckily Reginald had not neglected to put in his pocket such a selection from the papers handed over to him by Mr. Monro as contained evidence enough to satisfy the mind even of the most incredulous. Nor would it be right to accuse him of unfair dealing, because he took care to mix up with these documents several letters in which Cyril spoke his mind with a great deal more of freedom than respect of his uncle. Sir Charles read these, and pulling the bell violently, desired Mr. Cyril to be informed that he was

wanted in the drawing-room. But Mr. Cyril did not come. The servants sought him in his own apartment,—he was not there. They looked through all the rooms in the house, but he was nowhere to be found. At last, the porter being consulted, gave intimation that he had quitted home early in the morning, carrying with him as much baggage as if he were going to travel into some distant country. Of course, no one could doubt as to the causes of a flight to which shame, and perhaps the dread of punishment, must have impelled him; and so thoroughly was the indignation even of Sir Charles excited, that no human being thought for one moment of making any further inquiry respecting him.

And now came all those unravellings and explanations, of which, as I am not writing the history of the house of Trevenean, it will be sufficient for my present purpose if I give merely the outline. It appeared that Sir Charles had been industriously taught, both by Cyril and Monro, to look upon his son as a profligate in principle, and a low debauchee in his habits. Besides the ruin and early death of Emma Freeman, numerous peccadilloes, of which he knew nothing, had been charged upon him. While in Scotland, his career was represented as a tissue of follies and vices. Large

sums had been more than once remitted to Mr. Monro, for the purpose of paying debts of which Sir Charles was persuaded to pretend ignorance, while the tale of discredit was in each case told with such art as to command implicit belief. But that which alarmed Sir Charles most of all, and occasioned the sudden recall of the exiles to Morley, was a statement that Reginald had entangled himself with a woman of loose character so closely, that nothing short of his speedy marriage nearer home could save him. Hence the eagerness with which the match with Lady Julia had been patched up,—an arrangement which, though it was dictated on one side by considerations of a political nature alone, originated on the other in the anxiety of a father to save his only son from ruin. Moreover, it came out that Cyril had been in constant communication with his uncle on the subject of this northern engagement all the time Reginald and himself had resided at Morley; and that he went to Scotland with full authority to purchase, at any price, a release for his cousin from the trammels in which he was supposed to be bound. "And," continued Sir Charles, "the scoundrel satisfied me that he had succeeded. Here is an acknowledgment, signed Mary Maclain, that Reginald Trevenean is in no way bound to her

by the ties either of marriage or contract of marriage, for which I had the satisfaction of paying not less than twelve hundred pounds. Upon my word, this hopeful nephew of mine has made an excellent thing of my credulity. I can only thank God that he has failed in accomplishing his last design, which, but for an especial interference of Providence, must have succeeded also."

"I told you, my love," observed Lady Trevenean, "that you would live to see through that cockatrice yet."

"So you did, my dear," replied Sir Charles, not over and above delighted at the remark. "Like women in general, you are very knowing,—but it is always after events have come to pass."

With respect again to the statements of Isabel and aunt Mysie, these comprehended a detail of events, each of which, as it was listened to by the party most interested, shot like an arrow through his brain. After removing to Glasgow, on the decease of the good old minister, they had, it appeared, established themselves in small but commodious lodgings, where, receiving daily visits from Mr. Monro, they lived for a while in tolerable comfort. But by degrees Reginald's correspondence began to slacken: Mr. Monro threw out hints of

his growing coldness; and by-and-by Cyril arrived, avowedly for the purpose of reconciling Isabel to her fate. In doing this he had acted at first with some show of delicacy, seeking, as it were, to disguise the truth, and sounding rather her inclinations than her sense of duty. But when he found her resolute in distrusting the tale, he had at last put into her hand a letter written by Reginald himself, in which his marriage with Lady Julia was spoken of as a thing settled.

"Alas!" continued the poor girl, while the tears streamed from her eyes, "how could I resist such evidence as that? I believed that you had ceased to love me—I saw that you desired to disown me. I felt that I could not live long to harass you or any one, and I determined to submit. I made up my mind to die in my wretchedness, and to leave you unmolested either by complaints or remonstrances. Still, as the villain entreated me to write in my usual strain, in order to serve some purpose of his own, I did write a letter, which I intended should have been my last. But, oh! Reginald, how shall I proceed? My eyes were opened two days afterwards to a conviction of his duplicity and your innocence. He had the baseness, the unparalleled baseness, to make to me such propositions as, offered to any

modest woman, would have been an insult,—as offered to your wife were hideous. I rejected them with scorn: I appealed to Mr. Monro; I found him only half disposed to protect me, and I became desperate. The ruffian, seeing this, endeavoured to soothe; and I pretended to be reconciled. He quitted me, and I wrote to you a full detail of all that had happened. I did not, as I had been accustomed to do, put it under cover to Cyril, but sent it direct: yet I never got an answer. Then, indeed, I began to fear that you had deserted me; and when week after week rolled on, and still no letter came, fear grew into conviction.

"As yet we had never experienced the slightest pressure in pecuniary matters. To be sure, my heart rebelled against accepting a maintenance from one whom I believed faithless; but what could I do? I was without any other means of support, and I took the allowance which Mr. Monro made me. But he departed at last; and having neglected to establish any agent in Glasgow, the horrors of poverty were added to the rest of my misfortunes. This might be about ten months ago. I wrote to Mr. Monro, informing him of my condition; and I received an answer, intimating that if I would come to London, he would be able to do for me much

more than he could do while I remained in Scotland;—nay, he even insinuated, that by throwing me in your way, he believed that he should be able to renew in you feelings which he found were rather obscured than destroyed. Alas! how my heart bounded at the bare possibility of such an issue! I said nothing to aunt Mysie — I was particularly cautioned against bringing her in my train—and having been provided with money, set out alone. Mr. Monro met me at the steam-boat, and expressed himself in terms of great satisfaction at the promptitude with which I had adopted his suggestions. We got into the carriage which he had provided, and we drove to the house where you found me.

"O that I could forget my sufferings there!—but they are seared upon my brain as with a hot iron. My shrieks, my cries, my tears, my entreaties, were alike unavailing. These were but so many symptoms of my malady; and when I called upon you to protect me, the wretches lifted up their eyes and said, 'How she raves!'—Yes, Reginald, for ten long months I have been an inmate of that cell—for three months chained to the bed; and except for half an hour on each day, when I was led down into the yard, there to mix with unfortunates in every stage of the disease, never

permitted to breathe the air of Heaven. But it is all over now; I am thine once more, either for life or death, and the past shall be as a dream."

Such was Isabel's story—that of aunt Mysie was in its spirit not dissimilar. She was not slow, after their removal into the Low Country, of discovering the worthlessness of Monro's professions. He treated her at times scarce with common civility; and though she bore with it on Isabel's account, and even affected not to see, suspicions were excited in her mind which never wholly left her. At last, Isabel herself disappeared: yet, as she left a note behind, requesting that no stir might be made, things being in progress towards a consummation which would doubtless prove satisfactory to all, aunt Mysie held her peace. Moreover, she had no reason to complain for several months afterwards that she was forgotten. Monro wrote frequently, supplied her with money, and gave very flattering accounts of her niece's situation, which was, he said, as comfortable as that of a young woman could be, compelled to wait the decision of a tedious law-suit, and to maintain a struggle with the proudest and most relentless of English families. At last, however, a direct application was made for the certificate of marriage, which was all, as the applicant stated

that was necessary to establish his protegée's claim. But aunt Mysie, if in some points weak, possessed a good deal of shrewdness and some caution.

"I determined they suld get the lines; but I judged it couldna do harm, and it might do gude, if I produced them mysel'; so, instead o' enclosing them in a letter as he wanted me to do, I just pat mysel' on board o' a smack and cam up. When I showed mysel' at Mr. Monro's address, losh hae a care o' me, how he stared and stormed! But I didna mind that. Then there was troking backwards and forwards mony days; private meetings here, private conferences there, and I dinna ken a' what —but the marriage-lines I wadna quit. So at last he pretended that he would gang wi' me to the place whar we be't to use them; and I consented to accompany him. As to the rest, Maister Reginald, ye ken it already."

"And so there was no Mr. Lorimer, after all?" demanded Reginald; "no officer with whom you were acquainted?"

"Oh, ay," replied aunt Mysie, "there was an offisher; though his name was na Lorimer. There was Captain MacClachlin o' the 79th, a first cousin o' mine, wi' his wife, a fine body o' an Irishwoman, and seven bairns. We used now and then to tak our tea wi' them."

It is scarcely necessary to add, that when all these facts came to be detailed to Sir Charles and Lady Trevenean, they excited in both the most lively interest for their son's young and innocent wife. Not a moment was lost in communicating to Lord Templetown the substance of the discoveries that had been effected. Both he and his fair daughter spoke of themselves as extremely ill used—of the Treveneans as a base and low-minded race; but they saw there was no help for it. His lordship lost his command over the county; Lady Julia found another husband; and Reginald, having nursed Isabel in town till her health was fully restored, carried her in triumph to Morley. There, in a neat cottage on the outskirts of the park, they took up their abode; while aunt Mysie was sent back to Scotland at her own desire, with such a pension as rendered her a welcome guest in many a mansion which had once been shut against her.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAST ACT OF ALL.

The reader will have probably anticipated that it was not left for Sir Charles Trevenean, or his son, or his domestics, to make Cyril aware of the extraordinary occurrences which had recently taken place in the family. It might be about two o'clock in the morning consequent upon Isabel's discovery, that he found, on returning home from a rout, a letter lying upon his table. He broke the seal without having looked at the superscription, and read, with what feelings a person differently circumstanced might find it a hard matter to conceive, the following abrupt sentences:—

"Dear Cyril,

"We are all blown up! You were perfectly correct in your suspicions—the fool had wit enough to open his eyes, and fortune favoured him,—I have been nabbed in the very act. They have got possession of my writing-

desk, with all your letters. Isabel is at large! In a word, we are done for. I am off to Paris: if you are disposed to follow, you will find me at the Hotel de Londres, in Rue St. Hilaire.

"Yours ever,

"D. Monro."

Cyril read and re-read this abrupt billet in a state of mind which beggars all description. Not that there entered into his emotions the faintest tincture of remorse for the many crimes which he had committed, and the many more which he had intended to commit: but the consciousness that all were exposed beyond the remotest chance of evasion—the conviction that he was himself caught in the snare which he had set for another, — this it was, and this almost alone, that wrung his heart as if an iron vice had clasped it. Nor did it fail to add to his distress, when he recollected that he had never had the wisdom, usually possessed by persons of his stamp, to make hay while the sun shone. No store had been accumulated by him out of all that his uncle had permitted to pass through his hands: on the contrary, except a trifling sum, the chance residue of his common allowance, he possessed at the moment no resource against absolute destitution; and his conscience assured him that for further

aid he must look to his own ingenuity. He paced his chamber backwards and forwards for a full hour in a state of agitation which, had the cause been less atrocious, might have excited commiseration even in an enemy; and then gathering fortitude from despair, applied himself to pack up all that was of value, as well in his own personal wearing apparel, as in the articles, be they what they might, that lay within his reach. Not even the silver candlesticks that stood upon his table were passed by. He made what is called a clean sweep of the whole concern, and passed out, as the porter related, long before the family was stirring, encumbered with baggage enough to supply the wants of a voyager to the East Indies.

To hide himself for a day or two amid the recesses of Tower-hill, and to procure in that interval a passport from the French ambassador, were proceedings which the exposed scoundrel immediately adopted. He was wise enough, indeed, to insert a false name into the official paper, by which means his destination could not, he flattered himself, be traced by any persons likely to take an interest in doing so. And then he hastened to the address with which Monro had supplied him. Not that he entertained for that worthy any inordinate affection; on the contrary, the intimacy which had hitherto

subsisted between them was one much more of convenience than of mutual esteem. For Monro had taken especial care throughout to secure to himself whatever substantial advantages were going; while he left to Cyril only the prospects, in contemplating which he took so much delight. It was but natural that, in this their season of reverse, the recollection of that fact should occur powerfully to the mind of the sufferer. Still, he knew that the assistance of a friend was under existing circumstances indispensable, and he therefore made no scruple of using Monro as if he were such. He hastened to his apartments, where the reception that awaited him was both amicable and consolatory. Nor would it be just towards the talents of Cyril to conceal that his manner was altogether that of a man who confers, not receives, a favour. He accepted without difficulty the excuses which his companion offered in vindication of the exposure to which personal cowardice had impelled him, and bore himself throughout as became a man who was perfectly independent in his circumstances for the present, and if anxious at all, anxious only for the future.

I do not know that there could arise any benefit to the reader,—I am sure that a great deal of disgust would attend the writer,—were I to describe the daily habits of a man who,

being lost to all sense of honour, and decency, and self-respect, struggled, by fair means or by foul, to keep up what are called appearances. Such, however, was the career of Cyril Trevenean during a sojourn of six years in Paris, throughout the whole of which he lived, according to the worst meaning of the expression, by his wits; making a prey of all over whom he contrived to establish an ascendency,—namely, the thoughtless, the young, the sanguine, and the unguarded. Among other arrangements, he managed to introduce himself into the confidence of a house of extensive mercantile credit, of which, for obvious reasons, I am not authorised to give the name, but which carried on, under very peculiar circumstances, a large trade with London. Neither am I called upon to relate in full how the connexion began. The frequenters of ——— and ——— will doubtless understand that it is not very difficult in the atmosphere of either den of vice to acquire habits which grow into a second nature; and that strange intimacies are from time to time formed under the pressure of troubles, the inevitable results of such habits. Enough, therefore, is done, when I state that at one of these places of public resort Cyril contrived to make a gentleman so much his debtor, that, to deliver himself from an immediate difficulty, he

gave his confidence to a comparative stranger. From that hour Cyril became a prime agent in all the communications that passed between the opulent firm of ——— and ——— in Paris, and the not less opulent house of ——— and Sons in London. He travelled from one capital to the other, under various assumed names; negotiated bills of exchange, when such were needed; made out invoices, superintended the lading of vessels, and otherwise became a free trader on the most extensive scale. Yet he acted here, as he had done everywhere, with the most consummate selfishness. Monro, his ancient confederate in crime, was thrown overboard, and the intimacy of a whole lifetime was dissolved like the acquaintance of an hour.

Somehow or other, it almost always happens that men who live in the habitual violation of the laws are zealous advocates for the reform of abuses in the institutions of their country. I do not mean to insinuate that there are no patriots except among the ruined in fortune, in character, or in both: but that persons so circumstanced seldom enrol themselves on the side of established usages and legitimate authority, the experience of all ages and all countries has shown. There was, therefore, nothing extraordinary in the fact, that the chief partners in the two establishments with

which Cyril Trevenean was connected should have advocated, both in England and in France, liberal principles. Now, if Cyril had any bias at all, it was in favour of opinions the reverse of liberal. He had been taught, both in the Vicarage and at Morley Park, to account the British constitution, as it was settled in 1688, the most perfect system of polity the world had ever seen; and, as a necessary consequence, to approve or condemn the governments of other nations according to the degree of resemblance which they bore to that of his own. Of course, the downfall of Napoleon and the re-establishment of the Bourbons could not fail of being esteemed by him as events in the highest degree beneficial. Nor had the survey which he was enabled to take of the internal state of France, while, with his cousin, he traversed it from north to south, tended in any degree to deliver him from his prejudices. He saw fields in the highest state of cultivation, harbours crowded with shipping, manufactories in full employ, and a people generally contented. No wonder that he should have returned home fully impressed with a belief that, as France was happy and prosperous under the paternal sway of her sovereign, a change of government could be desired only by bad men for their own bad pur-

poses. When he visited Paris again, an outcast and an exile, his ideas underwent a remarkable change. He became convinced, by the reasonings of those with whom he associated, that "there was something rotten in the state of Denmark;" and that till king and priest were alike shaken aside, there could be no real happiness for the people. He was therefore forward to enrol his name among the list of patriots who had already matured, not exactly the revolution of July 1830, but one out of which the popular interests were expected to derive much more decided advantages.

It was not judged possible to excite, even in France, a movement sufficiently extensive, so long as men's minds were free from the dread of personal suffering. In Paris, the conductors of newspapers were indeed forward to inveigh against encroachments upon the liberty of the press; a cry which the deputies, over whom the press exercised an extraordinary influence, very readily took up. But in the provinces all was quiet; and it was determined to disturb that quiet. How far Cyril lent himself to these views of his party has never been fully ascertained. All that his own disjointed journal records amounts to this,—that he set out in disguise for Normandy, and that soon after his arrival the torch of the incen-

diary was busy from one extremity of the department to another. Night after night, fires burst forth,—by what hands kindled no one could discover,—which not only consumed the collected produce of the earth, but kept the minds of the people in the most painful state of excitement. A cry was raised, that the government, though strong to oppress, was too feeble to protect its subjects from outrage; and that the paid mercenaries that threatened the liberties of the Parisians were useless to defend the lives and property of the unoffending provincials. I do not know how far the opinions of a man in Cyril Trevenean's peculiar situation deserve respect; but he attributed no trifling share of the unpopularity which thickened round the head of the ill-fated Charles to the operations of the incendiary in Normandy.

From day to day, and from hour to hour, the conspiracy to dethrone the Bourbons gathered strength. The final explosion was indeed, in some sort, needful; yet, if any credit be due to the assertions of a felon, the Three Days of July were but the anticipation of events long and deliberately matured. In the operations of that stirring period, both as a combatant and a counsellor, Cyril played his part. But it was on another stage that the friends of

liberty expected at his hands the most important services. He passed over to England; carried with him introductions to various patriots there, and served for a time as a channel of communication between them and their allies in Paris. Meanwhile the more lucrative and scarcely less perilous occupation of a smuggler was not laid aside. With the machinery employed in carrying it forward he had long been familiar, and now having a twofold object in view, he did not scruple to become to a certain degree the superintendent of its movements. Hence his settlement, as James Marshall, in the grocer's shop at Waltham, with all the consequences arising out of it,—fatal alike to the public peace of the parish, and the private happiness of many of its inhabitants, of which a sufficiently detailed account has been given in a previous portion of these Chronicles.

It has been elsewhere hinted, that to one passion in particular Cyril was so much the slave, that no consideration of consequences to himself or others ever interfered to put a curb upon its indulgence. His behaviour to the wife of one of his Parisian employers had been as base as his treatment of Charlotte Amos; for which the phlegmatic temperament of the injured husband, and the manners of the country, saved him from reaping summary punishment.

In Amos, however, he well knew that he had a determined man to deal with; and that a bare suspicion of his daughter's dishonour would suffice to bring down his vengeance on the aggressor. Now, Cyril was perfectly indifferent who suffered, or to what extent suffering might go, so long as he himself escaped unscathed. He made, therefore, no scruple of communicating to the Excise such information as led to the attack of Amos's party; while at the same time he provided against the possible results of Charlotte's despair, or her father's triumph, by transferring himself, with all his goods, quietly to London.

His abrupt removal from the province allotted to him gave great umbrage to his trading confederates; while the prominent part which he had taken in the recent agricultural riots had, it appeared, drawn upon him the suspicions of those in authority. He was accordingly supplied with a sum of money, and recommended to remove for a season from his usual haunts. He betook himself to Birmingham, where, however, the Unionists refused to recognise him; and he dwelt there in privacy till his funds were exhausted. He applied for more, but received no answer. He then returned to London, and repaired to the warehouse in the City, with the determination of forcing himself back

into his old position by a threat of betraying all. His astonishment may be guessed at, when he discovered that the birds were flown, and the nest cold. The truth was, that Messrs. ——— and ———, apprehending some such catastrophe, had provided the best defence against it, by winding up their affairs during his rustication, and withdrawing to a new scene of action. Thus, then, after years of vicious labour, Cyril found himself deserted even by his partners in crime; for the very Parisians took care, in reply to the first application which he made, to assure him that they looked upon their connexion with so determined a profligate as ended.

Cyril's downfall from comparative wealth to absolute poverty was as rapid as that of the wildest speculator could be. It is but fair to add, that his courage did not fall with his circumstances. He saw, indeed, that he must be content to move in a humbler sphere; but he still trusted to move effectively. During his sojourn at Birmingham he had ingratiated himself into the good will of his landlady's daughter. He made up his mind to return to her; and, if the worst befel, to make her his wife, for the sake of the few hundred pounds of which her mother took care to say that she was possessed. As his appearance, while Mrs. Brown's lodger,

had been extremely good, and he quitted her leaving no debt behind, she gave ready credit to the tale which he told of his own respectability; and Mary Brown, with her three hundred pounds, became his. Of course, he never intended to continue in bondage one moment longer than might be necessary; so he quitted his bride on the fourth day after the wedding, and she saw him no more. I need not add, that he eased her of her small fortune. But three hundred pounds were of trifling account in the hands of one whose habits were as improvident as his morals were loose; and in the hells of St. James's they made themselves wings and flew away. Now, then, at length his spirits began to fail. He pawned or sold his wardrobe,—he disposed of his watch,—made various attempts to swindle, and succeeded. But, being new to such practices, he dreaded detection, and fled from London. Indifferent as to the route which he might follow, he bent his steps into Essex, and sat down by the wayside, faint and weary, just within hearing of the bustle of —— Fair. At this moment a caravan happened to pass, and he beheld thrust through the window an enormous head, of which the face was turned towards him. The monster smiled and nodded, and he returned the salute; upon which the vehicle was stop-

ped. Immediately a young man came towards him.

"I say, you—what's your name,—you be wanted in that ere van. Mother Blowhard's ta'en a fancy to ye. I was the favourite last week; mayhap your reign may be a thought longer."

Cyril was amused, and accepted the invitation, not, as may be supposed, from any predilection for the suitor, but because, being totally destitute, he did not know how to better his condition elsewhere. The ogress, however, was not to be put off with bare civility; she appeared to dote upon her new lover, and would not permit him to be absent from her sight a moment. In this species of horrid thraldom he continued several weeks, visiting, among other places, Birmingham, where one of the first persons to present herself in the giantess's apartment was his wife. Of course, a scene occurred in some respects similar to that in which Charlotte played a part at Sittingbourne, though the results in the two cases were different. Cyril was glad to avail himself of Mother Blowhard's assistance in escaping from one whose right to detain him could not be disputed; and being smuggled out of the town, was taken up again in Daventry, the she-ogre having furnished him with means

barely sufficient to carry him so far out of her longing gaze.

It was subsequently to this adventure, when in the joy of her huge heart the giantess had committed a well-filled money-bag to her lover's keeping, that the strange meeting between him and Charlotte Amos took place. Of what immediately followed, a statement has already been given, as well as of the consequences arising out of it, as far as Charlotte was affected by them. On Cyril's side the results were scarcely less critical. In the course of his travels as showman to a giantess, he had made acquaintance with many of the most accomplished thieves of the age; and to one of their haunts, in Seven Dials, he now betook himself. With the more polished members of the gang he entered into a confederacy. He gave proof of his own trustworthiness by contributing the chief portion of Mother Blowhard's earnings to the common stock; and he was initiated into the mysteries of the profession without delay. Never, since the days of Jonathan Wild, had a more diligent or willing pupil studied in this "university of London." In disguising his appearance, his gait, his tone of voice, Cyril, at the close of three weeks, would have matched his own skill against that of his master; and

the success which attended his first operations was surprising.

Cyril had already begun to excite the envy of his confederates, and, as a matter of course, to be known to the police, when he discovered Charlotte in Covent-garden theatre. He would have regretted the rencontre, had not the woman who was his companion seen and admired the girl, and pronounced her just the sort of person for whom she had been commissioned to look out as housekeeper to an old friend of her own. Now, as Cyril cared not what became of his victim so long as she ceased to be a trouble to himself, he readily gave in to the scheme; stipulating, as may be imagined, for an adequate compensation in the mean time, and calculating on much more extensive profits by-and-by. How the negotiation ended the reader is already aware. But the idea of using her as a tool having once entered into the miscreant's mind, he was not willing to relinquish it. He consulted his associates; received and rejected many different proposals, and might have failed at last but for an accident. One of the gang brought in, on a certain evening, a reticule which he had stolen from the arm of a young woman as she was alighting from a stage-coach in the yard of the Bull-and-Mouth.

It contained, among other things, a letter of recommendation to the Countess of Beddington, which in an instant was turned to use. The character of the countess was soon discovered, Charlotte was persuaded to personate the new lady's-maid, and the jewels were stolen.

And now comes the last scene in the career of this abandoned profligate, which proved to be, in some respects, more remarkable than any that had preceded it. The amount of the prize operating strongly on his cupidity, Cyril determined to keep the whole to himself, and therefore pretended to his confederates, whom he met in the evening, that the plan had entirely failed. It appeared, however, either that his manner had betrayed him, or that, judging of him by themselves, they distrusted the statement on its own ground; for while one set himself to watch the Countess of Beddington's door, another kept Cyril constantly in view. He was traced to a coach-office, and found to have booked himself all the way to Paris. Of course, suspicion was strengthened; and it received on the following day ample confirmation. What followed has probably been anticipated. Though the fugitive, by getting a start of eighteen hours, contrived to throw the officers for some time off the scent, the infor-

mation given at the Home Office was so circumstantial, that an application to the French authorities was promptly made, and as promptly answered. The police of Paris did its duty; and Cyril, after a search of a few days, was taken.

The jewels having been found in his possession, or traced to pawnbrokers, Cyril did not entertain the slightest hope that he would be able to evade justice. He knew, however, that the fashion of hanging for such crimes was obsolete; and an active imagination was busy in devising schemes for the future guidance of his proceedings in New South Wales, when an incident befel which cast a dark shadow even over these day-dreams. The steam-boat that conveyed him from Calais entered Dover harbour just as a man-of-war's boat was landing her crew; one of whom no sooner turned his face towards the deck of the packet, than he recognised the prisoner, and was by him recognised in turn.

"That is the incendiary!" cried he: "that is James Marshall!"

"What! Jones," observed the officer, "have we got James Marshall in hand?"

Cyril groaned, for he saw in this fresh accuser no other than Dick Solley, whom he had succeeded in drawing to the very edge of a

precipice, but had failed in casting down headlong. The facts of the case were these:—Solley had embarked, by virtue of his sentence, for Botany Bay. He had discovered and disclosed to the officer commanding the troops a projected mutiny among the convicts. He had carried arms in support of the commandant during the whole voyage, and was rewarded at its termination with a free pardon from the governor. But, ashamed to return home, he had volunteered on board the Pelican gun-brig; and to the first lieutenant, from whom he received great kindness, he made a full confession of all that he knew in reference to the disturbances in Kent. As chance would have it, moreover,—or rather, in the order of that Providence which sooner or later calls the wicked to account,—the Pelican was at anchor opposite Dover when the Calais packet arrived; and Solley, noticing his tempter as he was preparing to land, gave utterance to the exclamation just given. It was on his part involuntary; but its effect on the fortunes of Cyril proved decisive. He was tried for the capital offence. It came out in evidence that he had employed the utmost art to make Solley the actual perpetrator of the crime; that he so far prevailed as to lead him to the side of the barn, and to put a steel and tinder-box in his hands; but that then Dick's

heart failed, or his better principles asserted the dominion, and he refused to strike a light. "Well, d—me!" cried Cyril, "it shall not be said that there was no fire in Waltham." As he uttered this, he himself struck a light; and, before Solley could stay his hand, flung through a crevice in the wall a blazing match into a heap of straw.

On such evidence James Marshall, *alias* Bill Jones, *alias* Cyril Trevenean, was found guilty. He made ready for the fate which awaited him in the manner already detailed, and died the death of a malefactor, almost at the same moment that the ill-fated victim of his baseness rendered up her soul to Him who gave it.

THE RIVAL SYSTEMS.

THE RIVAL SYSTEMS.

CHAPTER I.

PARISH POLITICS.

I RETURN now to the village of Waltham, in which, as has been described in a previous volume, the vestry had determined to establish a manufactory on a scale somewhat more extensive than that to which the people had been hitherto accustomed. A steady opposition had been offered to the scheme by two classes of persons. Giles Solley, and the few that thought with him, objected to it on the ground that the habits of the paupers were not those of artisans; that the loom was not thriving elsewhere; that to hope for success, bringing, as they must do, the produce of unskilful hands into competition with that of practised weavers, was idle; and that, were the contrary the case, it was not in itself a desirable thing to render the place a seat of manufactures. "Supposing," continued Giles, "that the

thing should answer, and remunerate the parish for the outlay of capital, what will follow? Why, this:—individuals will be induced to embark in similar speculations; we shall have mills erected along the whole course of the stream; strangers will be tempted to come and settle among us, and the village will grow up into a town. Now, if we could insure ourselves against a reverse, I am not sure that I should object even to that; but we cannot so insure ourselves. The market will get overstocked—the people will be thrown out of work—and our rates, of which we complain now, will be quadrupled. No, no; against the manufacturing project I set my face—this is a strictly agricultural district, and so let it continue."

It is not however sufficient, even at vestry meetings, to be able to object: he who aims at carrying his audience along with him must follow up his objections by some counter-project. Neither was Giles Solley negligent on that head: he had taken in of late "The Labourers' Friend," the zealous advocate of the cottage-allotment system; and believing that a device which had answered elsewhere might be expected to answer at Waltham, he urged its adoption. But the parishioners of Waltham were not yet cured of their prejudice against letting land to the poor; they did not want

little gentlemen as servants; they would not therefore listen to his proposal for a moment.

Next came the suggestion of Mr. Salvage, the retired fabricator of cottons. His views stopped not short of the immediate commencement of a second Manchester, and he advocated their adoption with all the enthusiasm which the recollections of his own youthful career were calculated to inspire. But he, too, failed to carry conviction to the minds of his hearers. The project was on too large a scale; they were without funds to accomplish it—they doubted its wisdom in the abstract. Finally, they came to the sort of determination at which men anxious to do something, yet afraid of doing too much, are accustomed to arrive. They agreed to adopt a middle course, and were warned by both parties, upon whose advice they refused to act, that what they were about to do was worse than doing nothing.

Though Giles Solley had protested against this device, he was too good a citizen to refuse whatever assistance it might be in his power to afford in order to render it effective. As a private individual, he resolved indeed to give the land-allotment system a trial; and for that purpose made choice of two men, both of them industrious in their habits and the fathers of large families. To each he portioned off an

acre and a half of good land, subject to conditions, any violation of which would imply a forfeiture of the holding. In the first place, the sub-tenants were required to pay half-yearly the same amount of rent which he paid to the landlord; they were likewise to defray all the customary expenses, such as tithe, poor-rate, &c.; and they were never, except in protracted sickness to the men or their wives, or both, to apply for parochial relief. In the next place, they were not to look for more than four days' work in the week at full wages. Should Giles require their help at other seasons, he would of course pay for it; but he pledged himself to afford only this much of what is called steady employ. However, that they might start in the best condition, he undertook to plough, manure, and crop their lands the first year, and to treat them as he had hitherto done; that is, to employ them from Monday to Saturday till the first crops should have been gathered in. Great was the jeering among Giles's friends when they learned that he had really committed himself to so rash an experiment. "Ah, we'll see, we'll see," was the reply with which his reasoning was everywhere met. "Your little gentlemen will go on famously this year; and when harvest comes, they will seem to be in clover. But stay till

you begin to dock them of their two days' work: then we shall have grumbling in plenty, with rents falling into arrear, and Lord knows all what. It won't do, Giles, that you may depend upon: your friends will be the very first to seek parochial relief; and they will make the high rents, and the burthens to which they are liable, the excuse. I hope you mean to make them attend vestry meetings too?"

"Why not?" answered Giles. "I had not, indeed, thought of that; but the idea is an admirable one. I will do my very best to make them attend vestry meetings. For why is it that the labouring classes are so indifferent to the waste of parish money? Because they bear no portion of the burthen;—because they are themselves supplied out of it with more than their necessities require. But take a different course with them; make each pay his just proportion, be it great or small, and then if you can get them to attend your meetings, you will probably find that they will be as forward, and far more competent to detect and expose fraud, than you are yourselves. The hard-working man will not sit down quietly under the increase of a poor's-rate to which he is himself obliged to contribute."

"And so you think," said Mr. Sankey, with whom Giles was discussing the question, "that

if we were to settle all our labourers on small plots of ground, making them pay full rent, and tithes, and cesses, that we should enlist them on the side of the rate-payer, and create a feud between them and the paupers."

"I said nothing about feuds; neither is it my wish to see such in operation: but I do think, that by adopting my views you would very soon reduce your rates to nothing."

"Now, my good fellow, you must allow me to say, that I regard your whole project as that of a mere visionary. If we, with capital at command, cannot get a return from our farms, how do you imagine that a labouring man, with a wife and six children, can make a living out of a couple of acres?"

"I don't expect him to do anything of the sort: on the contrary, I value his plot of land as nothing more than a compensation for the loss of the occasional parish relief which all our labourers are accustomed to receive, and for the two days' work of which I propose to deprive him."

"What! would you put all your labourers on four days' work, and make *all* of them occupiers?"

"Not all, perhaps; nor yet any by compulsion. But I would put it in the power of such as desired it to hold a little land of

their own; and I am much deceived if your best men would not be of the number."

"And how are we to get our work done, supposing all the people were to close with your offer?"

"Well, then," replied Giles smiling, "even in this extreme case I will show you. We complain that the parish is too populous,—that there are more labourers than we can employ,—that we are obliged to keep one-third as good as idle. According to this statement, we require no more than two-thirds to cultivate our farms. What difference, in point of labour, can it make to us, whether we employ two-thirds of the people constantly, or employ all, giving to each only two-thirds of full employ?"

"Ah! but we must, upon your plan, relinquish a portion of our land."

"Be it so; and what then? We say the land does not repay the cost of cultivation; and burthened as it is now by one useless hand in every three, the case may be so. But shall we be losers if, in parting with a few acres from each of our farms, we get rid at the same time of a large body of superfluous dependents?"

"I cannot think that the poor man would ever make the thing answer."

"Why not? Let him crop his land as he pleases, and it will furnish him with wheat enough to supply his family with bread throughout the year. He will raise vegetables sufficient not only to supply the wants of his table, but to keep a pig; and the produce of his four days' work, with all that his children may earn,—his harvesting, hopping, and so forth,—all this will be disposable for clothing, fuel, candles, and rent. What occasion will that man have to come upon the parish at all, unless his own health or his wife's break down? and if I keep a family of eight persons away from the parish by sacrificing only the profits that might come to me from the returns of a couple of acres of land, don't you think I shall be the gainer? Why, I tell you that I would gladly give up a third of Crackstakes at once, were I guaranteed against paying poor-rates on the two-thirds that would be left."

"But the habits of the people, my good friend,—the habits of the people are not suited to such a state of society. And then, only consider the consequences! Supposing you to succeed fully for this generation, would you not, by encouraging early marriages, hurry forward population, and reduce yourselves in less than thirty years to a worse state than ever? Look at Ireland, where the allotment system

prevails. Surely you would not wish to bring England to that?"

"You crowd too much into one objection," replied Solley; "and I must follow you in detail. First, then, with reference to the habits of the people. These are not, I grant you, what they once were: but what has changed them? Our own improvidence,—our own mistaken methods of dealing with the labourers. We were by far too prodigal both in the wages we gave, and the amount of parochial relief which we afforded, in the good times: and when the bad times came, we found it impossible to go back from established customs. That, however, which we were afraid to do manfully and openly, we strove to accomplish by a sort of fraud. We took to paying our men a portion of their earnings out of the rate; and, by habituating them to be dealt with as paupers, we taught them to consider the character of a pauper as no way disreputable. Of course, the man who is paid by a parish, having no master whom he regards as interested in his welfare, soon ceases to consider his employer's interests, and does as little as he possibly can for his pay. Moreover, by cutting off the labourer from all hope of permanently bettering his condition, (and let me tell you that the large-farm system did that effectually,) we left him without any in-

ducement to practise economy, or to exercise self-control. Why should the poor man deny himself an immediate gratification, when he knows that he can never advance beyond his present state; that his savings can be of no real use to him, so long as the practice shall prevail of refusing relief till the applicant can no longer do without it? You know perfectly that if we, in vestry, believe that a pauper possesses property, we never think of inquiring how he came by it, but compel him to spend his last shilling ere we comply with his petition; — nay, as individuals we refuse to employ that man, on the plea that there are multitudes who more require employment. I ask how you can expect to find habits of industry and frugality among persons who have no hope except to spend their best days in perpetual toil, and to end them in a workhouse? But try a different system. Show the labourers that the road to independence is not blocked up against them; let them see, in the little two-acre holding, a link, as it were, that connects them with their betters. Cheer them with the prospect of compassing the one end immediately,—of attaining even to the other before they die,—and human nature must be a thousand times more depraved than I conceive it to be, if you fail to improve both their

physical condition and their moral habits. Mind, I don't mean to assert that you will accomplish this in a day. The experiment may partially fail. Many of those to whom we give holdings may disappoint us; but we must make up our minds to that. Only let us persevere, and eventually it appears to me that success is certain.

"Now, as to your second question, 'Why introduce into England a state of things which has occasioned so much misery in Ireland?' In the first place, allow me to remind you that there is such a thing as national character. Be the causes what they may, it is certain that the habits of the English and Irish labourer not only differ essentially at this moment, but have always been different. It does not therefore follow that a system which has failed in the one country, supposing it to have received a fair trial there, must fail in the other. But has it been fairly tried in Ireland? I am sure that it has not. I don't mean to pass judgment on living men; but I have read history to no purpose, if it have not shown me that the gentlemen of Ireland — the landed proprietors,—are, and always have been, the very reverse of what the same class are, and always have been, on this side the Channel. The Irish landholder is generally an absentee: he takes

no interest in the welfare of his tenants,—he cares for nothing but the punctual payment of exorbitant rents, which he squanders in London, or Paris, or Rome. Meanwhile, the tenant sublets to an under tenant,—he to a lower still, till we come at last to the miserable cotter, who holds his cabin and potatoe garden, not as I propose that our tenants shall hold their lands, but as an equivalent for a certain quantity of labour, of which his immediate superior keeps the account. How can that man be otherwise than miserable,—especially when, as I am assured, all gradations of society prey upon those beneath them, and long settlements between master and servant enable the former to cheat the latter out of any conceivable amount of his earnings? No, no, Mr. Sankey; draw no comparison between England and Ireland which shall lead you to anticipate, from the adoption of the land-allotment scheme here, the enormous evils that afflict a devoted peasantry elsewhere. And as to improvident marriages, is it easy to imagine a state of things that shall hold out stronger inducements to these than that which prevails in Kent at this moment? Why, you offer a premium upon early marriages, either by refusing steady work to a single man, or by remunerating his exertions by smaller wages than you give to his less able but wed-

ded comrade. Even on this ground, therefore, I don't think you will be worse off if you enter into my views than you are at present; but you may be better. Accustom men to certain comforts when young, and they will not rashly encumber themselves with wives,—at least till they believe that they will be able, when married, to live as they used to do when single, and to bring up their children as they were reared themselves. Nor is this all. There may be the risk of failure in my plan;—what plan for the future is without such risk? But if we weigh that against the inconveniences actually experienced, which is likely to kick the beam? Besides, I am one of those who hold that we have no right to be thinking always of remote consequences. Show me how I may confer an immediate benefit on society, even when it may be necessary to hazard something in times to come, and I will not hesitate to confer the benefit: because the chances of ultimate good and ultimate evil are equal; and, as I cannot determine between them, I am content to let my descendants take advantage of the first if it comes, and guard against the last if it threaten. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly," answered Mr. Sankey, "and feel the force of all that you have said: but I

am sure the scheme will never answer. Others won't enter into it; and unless it be universally taken up, it must fail."

"That don't follow neither. To be sure, if men are determined to keep their eyes shut, you cannot make them see the sun when he is shining; but the opportunity of judging for themselves shall certainly be afforded. If Tom Collard and Zachary Joyner, with their large families, keep from the parish and pay their rent, I at least will be satisfied that the system is a good one, and ought to be universally acted upon."

"*If*, Giles, *if*—your *if* is a great peace-maker."

"Be it so: neither am I the sort of man to deliver an opinion on this subject without it. But on the other,—your manufacturing device,—I *have* no misgiving: I am sure that must fail."

"Then you won't go with Rigden to town, and help him to find an overseer?"

"I will do anything the parish wishes, and lend all the help I can when the overseer is found; but my opinion will not be changed."

"Well, well, time only can determine between us. In the mean while Rigden proposes to start to-morrow by the Tallyho."

"Then I will go home, and be ready to attend him."

CHAPTER II.

CHANGE OF SYSTEM.

By some chance or another, Giles Solley and his companion, on the day following the dialogue transcribed above, found it convenient to proceed no further on their way to town than Sittingbourne. Next morning they found themselves seated on the fore part of Johnson's coach; when the conversation took a turn which led the kind hearted driver to discover that his passengers were inhabitants of Waltham. He immediately communicated to them as much of Charlotte's history as was then known to himself. The consequence was, that Giles, who felt deeply for the poor girl's misfortunes, left his companion to prosecute his inquiries alone, while he himself proceeded to Newgate, where that meeting took place between him and the dying penitent to which allusion was made in a previous volume.

The feelings of Giles were deeply interested by what he saw and heard within the walls

of the prison; and his mind was too much occupied in superintending the burial of Charlotte, and the administration of her little affairs, to permit of his affording to his companion the slightest aid in the search which he was prosecuting for a competent overseer. Mr. Rigden, however, managed that matter by himself: and an intelligent, sober, steady person was found, of whom his employers, Messrs. Pirn and Weft, spoke in the highest terms, and who had acted as foreman in their establishment many years. His name was Treddles: by birth he was a Yorkshireman. He had received a good education, and his propositions were fair, if not liberal. As the concern was in its infancy, he could not venture to accept even half of the profits: but he was very willing to be a stipendiary for a year; and if at the end of that period the business throve, to take his chance as a partner with the parish. I need not describe the particulars of the bargain minutely: it is enough to state, that Treddles accepted the twofold office of overseer of the works and governor of the poor-house,—that he consented to board, and clothe, and lodge the paupers at so much per head,—that he agreed to leave his books open at all hours for the inspection of the committee, and to balance them once a quarter,—and that his salary as master-

manufacturer was fixed at sixty pounds a year. Then followed the selection, under his superintendence, of such pieces of machinery as were deemed indispensable. Looms, spinning-jennies, carding machines, a stock of hemp, of India weed, &c. was laid in; all of which being paid for in ready money, sent back the parish deputies to their coadjutors in the country with pockets considerably lightened. But a severer drain remained. It was necessary to erect sheds, — to alter the arrangement of various rooms and passages in the house,—to establish workshops; in one word, to expend, upon what all men felt to be nothing more than an experiment, more than enough to keep the whole of the paupers in full employ for a twelvemonth.

"Still, if it answer," was the argument with which the mouth of the grumbler was stopped, "the money will have been well laid out."

"Ah, *if*," replied Giles: "your *if* is a great peace-maker."

Time ran his course, and at the end of several weeks of preparation,—weeks which, by the bricklayers, carpenters, blacksmiths, &c. of the village, were considered as very well spent, —the linen manufactory was pronounced fit for the purposes intended. In the front of the pile no great change could be discerned: it was still, what it used to be, a huge shapeless mass of red

brick, with a garden wall running back at right angles from one gable, and a long wooden gate, with a sort of parapet, extending beyond the other. But he who looked further than the front saw much to admire. From what had originally been a kitchen-garden of perhaps two acres in extent, a court had recently been cut off, along each side of which, so as to form with the mansion three sides of a square, ran a double row of new buildings. The outer tier was on both sides composed of brick, the inner of tarred boarding: the outer tier was roofed with tile, the inner had thatch. Athwart these again, but having passages to the right and left, was a longer shed, two stories in height, formed, like the inner tiers on the flanks, of timber. The whole of these were set apart for manufacturing purposes. Those on the right and left contained looms, wheels, and other implements of labour; that fronting the rear of the mansion was the storehouse. But, besides these, the ingenuity of Mr. Treddles had fitted up as carding rooms a long range of cells beneath the frontage of the main edifice, all of them lighted by area windows from the road. By such means he calculated that he should be able to keep busy at least twenty grown-up persons, with almost any given number of children; the latter being

used chiefly for spinning, the former for weaving or carding.

While these important works were in progress, it could scarcely be perceived that any effect was produced upon the pauper population of Waltham. They watched the gradual completion of the pile as something in which they had no interest; indeed, the only remark which was ever recorded as escaping any of their number, was a stupid expression of wonder, "what the gentlemen could mean by laying out so much money for no purpose." But when all things were complete, and the new master was inducted into his office—when the old couple that had managed the concern so long became themselves paupers, an order went forth from the committee at its usual place of meeting, which occasioned profound surprise, perhaps dismay, throughout the parish. The applicants for relief were informed, while receiving the customary pittance, that they need not come there for more: all who could not find employment for themselves must now apply to Mr. Treddles, who would set them to such jobs as he considered them capable of executing, and pay them in proportion to the work done. This was the law in reference to married people, who were also invited to send their children to the manufactory, in order that they might learn

the trade. But, with single men, a more summary process was adopted: they were to receive no relief out of the house, nor anything more than their food and clothing within; and even these were to be afforded as the price of the labour of their hands and heads, under the superintendence of Mr. Treddles. There was a loud howl in every corner of the district as soon as these decrees went forth, and bold was the language which was generally used in criticising them.

When the business day came round again, some scores of paupers, as if incredulous touching the real designs of the parish-officers, presented themselves as usual at the door of the committee-room. They were reminded one by one of the announcement made on the previous Tuesday; and one by one they returned to the throng, which, instead of diminishing, seemed to increase, in the great hall beyond. Then might be heard murmurs and complaints, interlarded, as generally happens in like cases, with an abundant quantity of oaths; till the passions of the whole body became violently excited, and they seemed ripe for any species of mischief. It was at this juncture that a short, stout, muscular man, whose large horny hands afforded evidence that he had not led the life of an idler, mounted a table, and, as if he had

been waiting for events to take the turn which he now witnessed, made a sign that he desired to address the meeting.

"Silence! silence!" cried out a dozen of voices at once: "hear Jack Knowler! Jack knows what 's what as well as the best on 'em. Let 's hear what he has to say."

"Gentlemen," began Mr. Knowler, "it's quite clear to me that them there gentlefolks, as they calls themselves,—them there farmers, —won't let us poor men live at all. They 've reduced our pay from fifteen to twelve shillings; they 've tooken off the allowance for our families; they won't pay no more rents; they won't even help us to get shoes or a bit o' clothing for our families. But we 've more to complain of nor that. They won't cultiwate their fields as they ought to do; for why? —because they would then be obligated to employ us all: and they 'd rather half starve themselves nor see us comfortable. And now, to crown all, they 've gone and built them there workshops,—them there prisons, I calls 'em,— where they expect us to come and weave for our wittals, and besides shuttin' up our children all day long to be stifled. Now, what I says is this: may I be d—d if I go near them workshops! Jist look at these here fingers! could I knock about a shuttle, or feel whether a thread

was coarse or fine, with things like them? I've always had a good character as a workman, thank God!—'cause, ye see, I'se always worked at things as I understood. But they might as well think of making a chimley-sweeper of me, at my years, as a weaver. I'll not weave, that's flat; and if they don't find me some other job, then I'll see further into it, I'm d—d if I don't!"

Jack, as may be imagined, was vehemently cheered while delivering this forcible harangue: it fell in exactly with the humours of the audience, and a loud shout at its conclusion testified that the judgment delivered was approved of. But, ere the meeting could disperse, another orator mounted the table, and though at first saluted with a contemptuous laugh, he too obtained in his turn a hearing. It was Timothy Twist, the foreman, under the old regime, of the hop-bagging concern; a pale, sickly animal, whose countenance, however, though long and haggard, displayed the marks of some intelligence. "Hear him! hear him!"—"No! no! we've heard enough. No weavers! we don't want weavers to teach us!" These were the cries against which he was obliged for a while to bear up, while beckoning with the hand for silence. At length silence was obtained, and the representative of the manufacturing interests began:—

"Gentlemen—If you think I'm agoing to contradict the gentleman as spoke last, you 're wery much mistaken: I perfectly agrees with him in all his sentiments. The farmers, and the parsons, and the squires, and the bishops, and the lords, and the king, is all the poor man's enemies. Jist see how they 've treated me. I had a sort of a living under Muster Slowfoot, the worthy old governor as they have reduced. To be sure, it weren't no great things neither;—for what's a guinea a week to keep a man and his wife and four children? However, I made it answer with management, till down comes a new man, as sends me to the right-about; and 'cause I doesn't know how to draw them there threads so fine as he wants them, he tells me he must reduce my wages, and give me only fifteen shillings as a journeyman. I say, then, with Muster Knowler, that the gentlefolks von't let us poor men live at all. But what 's the use of talking? How can he see into it? Where will he go for redress? Does he think the magistrates will side with him? Has he forgotten how they used the people at the time of the machine-breaking? And as to going away, and saying, 'I won't work—I 'll starve first,' that 's what I calls cutting off my own nose to spite my face. No, gentlemen, I propose that we do come here

for a job. Let their new overseer set us at it by all means. Can he make us skilful in a day? There's Mr. Knowler, for instance; what could *he* do at a loom? Vy, nothing at all, except spoil the web. And as to carding and spinning, mayhap he could turn a wheel; but for making a thread, it's my opinion he couldn't make a cable. Therefore I say, let's have no rebellion, no mutiny, no refusing to earn an honest penny in any way that they may put us to; and if they find their hemp wasted, and their goods unfit to bring into any market, vy, then, they may thank themselves: we can't do what we're not used to, but we can show that we're willing to do anything."

"What, then," cried Charley Fox, one of those regular shirkers that are to be found in every parish of England, a young man in the prime of life, who was always lame, or in some other way incapacitated from labour—"you'd have us single men go quietly into the house, and work for our bare wittals?"

"If you can find wittals out of the house, and without working, Charley," replied the weaver, "by all means stay out and get them."

"I don't care about going into the house," said the hopeful Charley: "there's wery good grub to be had there. I've tried afore, and

I don't mind trying it again. But work I won't; blow me tight if I do!"

"I thought you had more gumption than I find you have," answered the weaver, with somewhat of a contemptuous intonation. "Who 'll get tired first?—you of spoiling the webs and wasting the gentlemen's money, or they of setting you to a sort of employ you don't know nothing about? But it 's no use speaking to men when they won't understand."

"*I* understand," shouted a dark-visaged man, apparently about thirty years of age; "*I* see your drift, Tom. Dang it! your wit 's worth a score of Jack Knowler's perseverance. I'll hold up both hands for your scheme. What, gentlemen, can't you take?—don't you perceive that he as wastes another's goods has a far better bargain than he as furnishes the goods to be wasted? I vote for closing with the gentleman's proposal at once."

The meeting was not, however, so fully convinced as the last speaker. They had, to be sure, a high respect for his judgment; for Simon Stannard was allowed to be one of the cleverest fellows in the county. But, of all classes of men, your thorough-bred English peasant is the most dogged; being, whether for good or evil, next to immovable after he shall have

once made up his mind to anything. "Never you trust to that Simon," was the cry: "once they get us within these walls, see if they don't have it all their own way. No, no—far better fight it out at the beginning, than let things go so far and then try to mend them. We 'll all strike work."

"Do, by all manner of means;" cried Simon, "and then see who 'll suffer. Strike work! What the d—l brings you here but the want of work? I say, agree to a man with what the gentlemen propose, and leave the rest to the management of Tom and me—we 'll see you righted."

The people still wavered, and many of them went away confident in the excellence of that system of manly resistance which Jack Knowler had recommended: but when they found that such of their neighbours as were regularly employed could not be prevailed upon to join in the strike, the utter hopelessness of their position became apparent to them. One by one they gave in their submission; so that, before the evening of the second day, five-and-twenty single men transferred themselves permanently to the workhouse, and almost an equal number of fathers of families professed their willingness to join them at the hours of labour. Meanwhile the national schools were

wofully thinned, in consequence of the removal by their parents, of boys and girls, to whom, in the new manufactory, an opening was likewise offered.

"Well, what do you think now, Giles?" said Mr. Rigden to his brother churchwarden, the day after the house was filled, and the establishment of carders and spinners completed. "You hinted that we should not find the people willing to alter their habits, and that the manufactory, if worked at all, would be worked by strangers. What do you think now?"

"That neither you nor I have yet seen the end. Stop a while, till these artisans of yours shall have had a trial of their new employment, and you a trial of their skill. My opinion is not changed from what it was at the outset, but I am open to conviction whenever it shall be proved to be erroneous."

"Ah, well, well, Giles, you are your father's son, that's clear enough. I suppose the old gentleman would have lost his senses altogether had he survived to witness such a change as this. And yet I am confident the thing will answer."

"We'll see, we'll see," replied Giles, and turned up the lane that led to Crackstakes.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORKHOUSE SYSTEM.

The peculiarity of character which holds the native of England apart from the native of France, or Spain, or Germany, or Russia, is not more broadly marked than the differences in all their habits of acting, speaking, and thinking which distinguish the agricultural from the manufacturing portions in the mass of English society. The agriculturist—I speak, of course, of the day-labourer—can scarcely be called a gregarious animal at all. He inhabits a cottage apart from the cottages of other men; he resides in the bosom of his own family; he goes forth to his toil alone—and alone, or next to alone, pursues it. His education is, for the most part, of a very narrow order: in many instances he cannot read—in many more he reads nothing except the Bible, a book of religious instruction if it be put into his hands, and a newspaper. The latter source of knowledge, indeed, is a luxury of very modern growth with

him, his addiction to which has certainly not improved his morals; but which, being very seductive in itself, is rendered more so by being spread out on the table of a pothouse or a beer-shop. For it is in the evening, after his work is done, that the agricultural labourer takes his ease, if he take it all. To be sure, the best of that class are content with home even at that season: and if there be any inducement to keep them there,—such as a garden to dig, or a little plot of land to cultivate, — they will never think of going further. But unfortunately these inducements are not always at hand, and the habits of the rural population have suffered grievously from their absence. For the agriculturist is not a sort of animal who makes, or wishes to make, large strides upwards in the scale of humanity. He troubles himself very little with affairs of state; he has no curiosity in the investigation of sciences. In intellect he is often sharp enough; but, for want of material on which to exercise it, he loses in a great measure the command of the faculty. The agriculturist hates innovation of every sort: leave him to himself, and he will do in all things what his father did before him; jog him on by placing within his reach implements of increased utility and convenience, and it is an even chance whether you gratify or sour him. The agri-

culturist has his own virtues and his own vices. Among his virtues, considering him as a member of the community, may be classed an instinctive respect for law and station. It takes a positive exertion to make him turbulent: but, on the other hand, he is obstinate, and dogged, and coarse, and vindictive; and, in his own family, sometimes harsh, and even cruel. The young agriculturist is, for the most part, half a savage—one whose very movements resemble those of the overgrown beasts whom he drives or leads; but the old agriculturist, if he have escaped the vice of drinking—the besetting sin of Englishmen both in town and country, is not unfrequently well-bred, and is almost always religious and humble-minded. Finally, the agriculturist, though stout of heart, is not remarkable for any chivalrous spirit of daring. From a bout at fisticuffs he will scarce turn away; but a few soldiers, with arms in their hands, will disperse without firing a shot, the most excited rural mob that ever came together.

The reverse of this in almost every particular is your operative weaver or artisan. Breathing continually the fœtid atmosphere of a workshop, and spending all the hours of his waking existence in society, the operative loses in some sort all consciousness of idiosyncracy in the feeling that he is but a portion of a

mighty mass. To a frame often feeble, and almost always unhealthy, he adds a mind restless and active, which, like the wheels in his own machinery, is continually driving at some end, and a degree of intelligence far more available than that of which many that move in a more refined circle can boast. Yet the operative would be as much at a loss how to get through the day were he condemned to spend it alone in the open air, as the agriculturist is to understand how it may be possible to endure an imprisonment of twelve hours' continuance in one of the mills at Manchester or Glasgow. The operative is a reflecting animal; show him that change implies improvement, and he will fall in with it cheerfully and at once; because his understanding on points relating to his own business—and it is of that alone I now speak—is almost always excellent. Moreover, the operative is an ambitious animal. His education, whether neglected in early youth or the reverse, is constantly going on. He is always learning something from those with whom, during the hours both of work and of play, he is associated; and in no species of lore is he more carefully instructed than in that which he is pleased to designate as political economy.

The operative is the vainest of living men; he has learned to repeat by rote the adage

"knowledge is power," and repeats it till it ceases to convey to his mind any definite idea; unless, indeed, the firm persuasion, that, being already possessed of a certain degree of knowledge, he himself ought to possess a certain degree of power also. As a member of the commonwealth, the operative is always ready to cabal; and his cabals become the more formidable by reason of his habitual subjection to social control. As a man, the operative is vicious, immoral, irreligious, selfish. From the increase of his earnings, be these what they may, his family derives no advantage. He never visits home except to swallow in all possible haste an ill-dressed morsel; and then, flying from the den of wretchedness, to which his wife and children are condemned, he takes shelter in the public house where the club of which he is a member is accustomed to assemble. Of the habits of the operative in his old age it is not easy to speak, for he very seldom attains to old age: but those of youth and manhood are in his case too often such as compel the philanthropist to doubt whether mankind have gained or lost in point of happiness by the improvements of which he hears so much.

If these sketches be drawn with any regard to verisimilitude, it will appear that the operative and the agriculturist are as much op-

posed in every quality that contributes to produce human character as it is possible to conceive. The one is a creature composed entirely of mind — of a vicious and depraved order perhaps, but still of mind; the other, an animal possessing little more than body. For even in reference to courage I believe that the operative has the advantage, though the inefficiency of his physical powers may often render it useless. And it will further appear, that of all the attempts that ever were made, the effort to introduce among the one class habits which are congenial only to the tempers of the other, must be the most hopeless. Of that truth, however, the members of the vestry at Waltham were either ignorant or forgetful: they thought only of rendering surplus hands available; they never stopped to inquire whether they could succeed, if these hands should be applied to operations in which there was no mind to direct them. But the overseer, Mr. Treddles, was not slow in discovering that the tools with which he was required to work were quite unfit for the given purpose. He looked at the men's hands as they came in—they were all swollen, hard, gristly, and destitute of feeling. He put a few questions here and there, with the view of sounding the depth of their intelligence, and the answers which he received convinced him that it was universally shallow.

"Lord help me!" cried the poor man, shrugging up his shoulders, "I have yoked myself to a pretty burthen indeed." But the remonstrances which he considered it his duty to make were very lightly regarded: the gentlemen did not expect him to work miracles—he must have patience; they would give him all the support in their power, and they were sure that a man of his talent must eventually succeed.

"Succeed in what, sir?" demanded Treddles.

"Why, in converting these idle fellows into profitable workmen, to be sure," replied Mr. Sankey.

"Do you mean the full-grown men?" asked the overseer.

"Undoubtedly I do! Whom should I mean?"

"Then it is right that I should tell you in the outset that the thing is impossible. With the children we may do something, that is, if you are willing to incur some further expense, by authorising me to hire three or four intelligent overlookers. But the men—you might just as reasonably expect to melt a rock with a blazing furze-bush as to make them different from the louts that they are."

The gentlemen stared at one another; and Mr. Sankey and Mr. Rigden both looked displeased as they observed a smile curl upon Giles Solley's lip.

"Then, sir," said Mr. Sankey sharply, "we have been taken in. You stated nothing of this sort to Mr. Rigden when he laid our plans before you: you asked only about the extent of accommodation, and the number of hands that were to be placed at your disposal."

"Pardon me, sir," replied Treddles; "if anybody has been taken in, I am he. You did not tell me that the five-and-twenty men and the dozen or two of children whom I was to have under me were all downright clodhoppers!"

"Well, well, gentlemen," interposed Giles, laughing, "it's no use to dispute the point now: we are all of us let in for a good thing, and we must make the most of it. What can your louts do, Mr. Treddles?"

"Possibly they may be able to tease hemp, and turn a few wheels; but I don't want half their number for that purpose. As to anything further, they will never be brought to it."

"And the children?"

"I can't do aught with them neither, unless I have overlookers."

The members of the vestry fumed and fretted; but there was no help for it. A thousand pounds had been expended in buildings and machinery; it would be ridiculous to pull down the one, and sell the other, at a dead loss, without having once made an attempt to use

them. So they instructed the overseer to return to his charge, and gave him authority to provide himself with three assistants, that being the smallest number with which he thought he could go on.

"Upon my honour, Giles, I shall begin to think that you were right," said Mr. Rigden, as the meeting broke up.

"Oh no, it is not fair to judge so soon; we will wait a bit." And they did wait—though not without finding matter enough, even during the pause, to keep their anxiety from sleeping.

Shift we the scene, good reader, and turn our eyes towards the reformed workhouse. We stand upon the high road facing that last resort of the idle, and behold a pile of dingy brick, three stories high, crowded with windows tall and narrow, and roofed over with flaring red tiles. We ascend a flight of a dozen steps, at the top of which is a door, into the upper panel of which is introduced a grating, with a shutter to close it up at will. The door being always kept bolted, we knock; and an old wrinkled face having first peeped at us through the grating, the bolt is drawn and we are admitted. If there is not much at this stage of

our progress to attract the sense of sight, that of hearing is strongly affected. While we hesitate, as it were, in a narrow passage, terminated in some sort by a wooden staircase, though leading off to a door beyond, our attention is riveted by a hubbub of voices and an incessant shuffling of heavy feet. The sounds proceed from an apartment to the left of us, the door of which faces a similar aperture to the right; and we are about to satisfy ourselves as to the cause, when Mr. Treddles presents himself and begs us to follow him. We do so, and he leads the way into the apartment on the right, a spacious hall, with two long wooden tables running from end to end, and an ample store of benches.

"What may be the use of this room, Mr. Treddles?"

"It is the dining-hall, sir; and I wish with all my soul I had never seen it."

"Why so, friend?"

"Because a man had better keep a bedlam than such a place as this. Here they've sent me five-and-twenty able-bodied young men, that not only can't do anything that Christians ought, but won't do what they can. Did you hear the row they were kicking up as you entered?"

"I did; and I was on the point of going among them to ascertain the cause, when you called me away."

"Oh, then you shall hear the story from their own lips. Come."

We re-cross the passage after this dialogue, and enter what is called the men's apartment. Behold it. It may measure perhaps thirty feet by five-and-twenty. It has two windows, both looking to the road; it is furnished with benches and a capacious fireplace. There are assembled here the five-and-twenty new-comers, with about a dozen old worn-out men, denizens of the same spot for years; and to these are added fifteen or sixteen boys. But the numbers are nothing—it is the way in which they are ocupied that strikes us. Not a soul among them has anything to do: they are walking backwards and forwards, cursing, swearing, shuffling on the sanded floor with their feet, and looking in excessively bad humour.

"Hulloa, my men! what 's all this about?—why are you not busy in the weaving-room?"

"Us weave!" replies Simon Stannard, "what do we know about weaving? Besides, do you think we 're agoing to do anything to oblige that 'ere chap, when he uses us like dogs?"

"What has he done to you, friend?"

"He gives us soup for dinner that I wouldn't

give to a pig, and won't let us smoke our pipes beside the fire."

"That's it, sir—that's the ground of complaint," interposes Mr. Treddles. "Because I won't let them smoke in this room, they all struck work; and because the cook happened to put a little more parsnip than usual into the soup yesterday, they swear they won't touch it again."

"Are they allowed to smoke in the yard?"

"As much as ever they please: but the smell of smoke is offensive to some of the old people, and the custom is therefore prohibited in-doors."

"Now, Simon, what can you say against that? Is it fair that the old should suffer inconvenience to accommodate you, particularly when the yard is open to you?"

"Then why don't they give us a room of our own. It's no wish of ours to be here—we never applied to come in; we wanted work—work that we could put our hands to, and no favour. But, instead of that, they order us in here, and then expect that we're going to give up all our own customs at their pleasure. I'm d—d if I, for one, will stand it!"

"I should like to taste the soup." A basinful is brought forthwith; we examine it, observe that it smells well and looks excellent.

It is made from ox-heads with other coarse pieces of beef, and is thickened with peas, parsnips, onions, and rice. We taste it; and so perfectly does it accord with our palate, that we finish the whole. We return the empty basin to Mr. Treddles and turn to the men.

"Now, my lads, I must say, that if you object to soup like that, you don't deserve food at all. I never tasted better; and I only hope that Mr. Treddles will be firm, and give you nothing till hunger makes you ask for what you now refuse."

"It may suit your stomach," replies Charley Fox, "but it don't suit mine. It 's worse nor physic to me."

"I hope you may never get worse, Fox."

"Pooh, pooh!—botheration!—what's the use of jawing here?" cry several voices at once; "we're Englishmen, and will be treated as such. The parish has a right to find us in work; and we won't be imprisoned here."

"The parish is obliged to keep you from starving, but is not obliged to treat you as if you were earning a livelihood for yourselves. Are you not ashamed to be here—young men and able-bodied?"

"What are we to do?" answered Charley. "We 're all willing to work, if they 'll give us a job."

"Do?—List for soldiers, to be sure, or go to sea, or seek your livelihood in any other reputable way;—do anything that's honest rather than this."

"I'se no fancy for soldiering!" cries one voice. "I'se above a thing of that sort!" cries another. "I'd go to sea," says Charley Fox, "only I must ha' my mother wi' me." A loud laugh follows this sally, the tone of which convinces us that neither argument nor any appeal to personal feeling will have the smallest effect. We therefore turn to Mr. Treddles, and desire him to show us the women's apartment. He complies; but instead of going back the way we came, he leads right through the middle of the throng. A door is opened in the partition beyond, and we are at once in the presence of the ladies.

The first thing that strikes us with astonishment is, that there should be no means of getting at this female saloon except through the men's apartment. We express our surprise to Mr. Treddles, who joins in all our observations, and goes on to say, that the effects are not different from what might be expected. No female, be she young or old, escapes insult of the rudest kind; and the very children become vitiated before they ought to know good from evil.

"These young men have been in the house

only four days, and such scenes have been enacted as make me shudder. I never saw in the most crowded manufactory in Leeds anything to come near it."

We now look round; and lo! the old and the young, the sick and the well, the infant and the mother, the idiot and the sane, are all huddled together. Moreover, they are all idle. There is no occupation for mind or body; except that here and there the mother of an illegitimate child suckles her baby, and an old woman, cowering over the fireplace, spells her Bible. The spectacle is altogether distressing in the extreme, so we desire to be led through the dormitories; and our wishes are obeyed.

We again thread our way back through the men's apartment, where the same idle and dissolute scene continues to be enacted. From that we emerge into the passage, and mounting the stairs, find ourselves in a long corridor, having numerous galleries on either side. These are appropriated to the use of the single men, and each contains from eight to sixteen beds. They are clean and airy; as are also four little cells, in which we learn that four aged couples take their rest. All are empty; for Mr. Tred dles, like a sensible man, insists upon his people coming down-stairs when the bell rings at five in the morning, and none, except the old and

the sick, are supposed to go up again till bed-time. Having completed this survey, which is on the whole satisfactory enough, we mount another flight of stairs, and arrive, as before, at a second corridor. In its arrangements it corresponds exactly to the gallery beneath, and is set apart for the use of the women.

"You don't mean that the men and women pass by the same stair to their sleeping-rooms, and that there is a communication constantly open between them?"

"Indeed I do, sir; and the moral consequences I leave you to guess. To be sure, I hope to remedy this a little; for the gentlemen have allowed me to put up a door at the bottom of this flight, which will be ready to-morrow. But even that will not render the place fit for the uses which it is designed to serve. If the workhouse system is to be fairly tried, you must have buildings on a totally different plan of construction from this."

"Have you any sick-ward?"

"No, not in particular: the whole house is supposed to be for the sick and the infirm; and so, when a man or a woman falls ill, we are obliged, in our present crowded state, to nurse them as well as we can. It is true, we try to keep the sickly as much together as possible; and the married people attend on one another.

Here is a room in which an old man lies dying."

We enter, and see on a pallet the shrivelled wreck of a fellow-creature, his head encased in a red nightcap, and one thin yellow hand stretched upon the coverlet. He breathes heavily; but his eyes are open, and he evidently retains his senses. At the foot of the truckle bedstead sits an old woman, wrapped up in a red duffle cloak to keep herself warm. She has a pair of spectacles on her nose, and a prayer-book lies open before her. The cell in which this couple live and sleep is very small—perhaps twelve feet square: it has a door and window, but no fireplace; and of course the atmosphere, even in winter, is close and stifling,—in summer absolutely overpowering. Its furniture, again, consists of a large box or chest, a small table, a stool, and the bedstead.

"Has your husband been long ill, dame?"

"He's been failing, sir, these three years: but at Whitsuntide he grew worse, and now I think he won't be long here. It will be a happy release whenever God pleases to take him,—and he knows that."

The old man bowed his head, as if assenting to this sentiment.

"And you nurse him yourself, dame?"

"As well as I can, sir: but master is very

good; he sends one of the women often to help me. He's very good to us all."

"Does the clergyman ever visit you?"

"Oh yes, sir, very often. It's the greatest comfort we have: for this world was never much to us at the best of times, and now it's nothing."

We turn to Mr. Treddles, and ask him what sort of people these are.

"They are a worthy, contented old couple: I wish all the rest were like them. And, to say the truth, I don't find the old people in general hard to manage. But to try this new plan with the young, in a place so ill adapted for the experiment—It can't succeed, sir, and it won't."

We heartily assent to Mr. Treddle's opinion; drop a coin into the dame's hand to buy tea, and walk away, not without something like a suspicion that more would yet come of the manufacturing device.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ALLOTMENT SYSTEM.

Though Giles Solley thus lent himself to forward, as far as his influence could extend, the schemes of his fellow-parishioners, he never for a moment laid aside his own project, or entertained a doubt as to its wisdom. He had looked round among the labouring people, and discovering two whom he believed to be honest—whom he knew to be industrious, he resolved to begin with them. Not willing, however, to plunge headlong into the speculation, he judged it prudent, before taking one step further, to hold some conversation with the men themselves. Accordingly, about seven o'clock one summer's evening, when he calculated that Tom Collard would be returned home, he directed his steps towards his cottage. I may as well describe its localities, inasmuch as the picture will convey, perhaps, a clearer notion of the man's habits of life than could be done by a detailed account of them.

Tom Collard's cottage was one of two which adjoined; the other being occupied by Zachary Joyner. They stood in the middle of a small garden, by the front fence of which ran a low sandy lane, while behind was a small hill, with a windmill on the top of it. You stepped over a sort of stile to reach the door, and found yourself on a paved front-door path, so perfectly clean, that it seemed as if it were washed as regularly as the cottage floor. On your left lay Tom's flower and vegetable garden, very limited in extent, but kept with a degree of neatness that both surprised and delighted. A little bed of onions, a little bed of greens, a couple of rows of peas, a few carrots—these were the main produce of the glebe; and they were divided by clumps of polyanthuses pinks, a carnation or two, and as many hyacinths; rose-bushes forming the hedge that kept them apart from the centre walk. On your right was the cottage, with its casement windows below and above, not one diamond pane in which was broken: and when you passed the threshold, you entered upon an apartment, low in the roof, to be sure, but clean as woman's hands could make it, and thereby strongly indicative of the tastes of the occupants.

When Giles paid his visit this evening, Collard

was seated in an arm-chair, with a child of two years old mounted on his knee, and another a year older standing beside him. The supper was on the table, and three healthy-looking boys, the eldest apparently about twelve, were, with their two little sisters, preparing to take their places beside it. The mother, again, with an infant at the breast, was in the act of dividing to each his portion. For the supper, like that of the English labourer in general, consisted of a Dutch cheese, a loaf of very white home-made bread, a little tub-butter, a few radishes, a salad, and a pot of weak tea. There was no milk—there was no animal food; the sugar was very dark: yet the clean cloth, the dishes whole and well-washed, the horn-handled knives, bright in the blade, and the pewter spoons scoured so as to rival silver, gave to the whole scene an air singularly attractive. And when Giles cast his eye round, and saw how trim and neat all the appurtenances were,—the little coloured prints hung round the wall, the chimney-piece surmounted by a few bits of old china, and the floor crisp and nice with its fresh coat of sand,—he could not help saying to himself, This is the house of an industrious and happy man, albeit he is poor.

Tom rose as his master entered,—for Tom

was one of Giles's steady men,—and in a frank and manly tone begged him to take a seat. The other did so freely, but requested that Tom would finish his supper.

"Oh, there 's no hurry about that, sir," said he: "the boys will eat theirs, if you please, because the garden behind, wants a little dung to it, and we have the prospect of rain before to-morrow; but I can attend you wherever you want me."

"I don't want to take you from home, Collard," replied Giles; "I have come rather to have a little talk with you where we are. How are you getting on?—what sort of a living do you make?"

"Thank you, sir, I have no right to complain. God has been very good in keeping sickness from my door this good while; and as long as we are all sound in wind and limb, we can rub on somehow."

"I am glad of it, Tom; and yet I think you might be better. You have a garden, I see."

"Yes, sir," replied Tom, with an expression of alarmed pride in his eye; "and if you fancy I don't do my best with it, I beg you to look round."

"I think you do make the most of it, Tom. But it is very small: it can't be of much service to you."

"Yet I wouldn't like to part with it," replied Collard: "it's the greatest comfort I have; for it enables me to bring up my boys in habits of industry."

"Do you think you could manage a larger?"

"Ah! I wish I had the offer of it, sir."

"Well, but could you afford to pay rent for it if you had the offer?"

"Why, sir, I pay seven pounds a year for this here house, because the landlord lets me have a few perches of garden along with it; and if I can afford to do that, I am sure I could better afford to pay rent for a larger piece. But it's no use thinking of that; for you gentlemen hire up all the land, and we poor men can't get a rood. I don't think that quite fair, sir; do you?"

"I am not sure that I do, Tom; at least, I, for one, would gladly see a new system tried, if I were persuaded that it would answer. But would it answer? We farmers can't make the land pay: could you, if you had it?"

"I only wish somebody would let me have a portion,—say an acre or two,—and I fancy that I should do more with it than you, sir, or e'er a farmer in the place would dream of doing. But, as I said just now, you won't do this, though you all complain that you are sinking your capital."

"And how can it be otherwise, my good fellow? Only look at the poor's-rates: they are enough to break down both landlord and tenant."

"So they are, sir; and so they will be, as long as you either pay men for doing nothing, or make up wages, which each ought to pay out of his own pocket, from the poor-book. Now, if, instead of doing this, you would let each poor man have a little field, then all that wished to make a living would be able to do so, and the idle might starve, as they deserved."

"I am very glad to hear you talk so rationally, Tom; for, to say the truth, the sole purpose of my visit this evening was to ascertain whether you would yourself like to hire a couple of acres, and to take them on such conditions as I can afford to propose."

Tom looked at his master with an expression of joy, hope, and hesitation in his countenance, which Giles could not observe without emotion. He replied, however, like a cautious man, by demanding the nature of the proposed conditions.

"That you shall pay to me the very same proportional amount of rent that I pay to my landlord; that you pay this twice a year; that you be liable to all the customary burthens, such as rates, cesses, taxes, tithes; and that

you come from time to time and attend the vestry meeting."

"But I can't afford to give up my employ, sir."

"No, Tom, I never meant that: only, as you will require a certain portion of time to cultivate your own farm, my notion is, that if I ensure you four days of steady work in the week, you will be able to go on."

Tom mused for a few moments, and then said,

"If I had once got in my crops, I think that I could;—that is, supposing my harvest and hopping was still ensured to me, and my wife and children allowed to help."

"There also our views correspond," said Giles. "I never meant that you should go to a short allowance of work till after your first crop was got in. But there is another condition still, Tom, to which you must subscribe."

"What's that, sir?"

"That you never apply for parish relief, and that you are never seen tipsy."

"I don't think you or any one else ever saw me the worse of liquor these fifteen years," replied Tom: "and as to parish relief, God knows, I never seek that when I can help it. I have had my own share of suffering; yet I'll

venture to say my name will not be found five times in the list of persons relieved."

"I know all that, Tom; and therefore I have the less hesitation in making these stipulations with you. But I can't be off making them; they are quite indispensable."

"Nor do I object to them, I assure you, sir. I only said what I did, to convince you that in agreeing to your terms I put no violence on my feelings."

"Well, then, is it settled between us?"

"I think so," answered Tom: "and yet, if you would be so good as give me a day to consider and make my calculations, I should be better satisfied. I have no fear that I shall change my mind; but one likes to see the road clear before one, ere one sets out from home. If you will give me till to-morrow, you shall have my decided answer then."

"By all means, Tom; indeed your caution only confirms the opinion which I had previously formed of you, that if there was a man in the parish with whom this experiment could be tried, you are he. But tell me, do you know of any body else to whom I could safely make a similar offer?"

"There's Zachary Joyner, sir, next door, as hard-working a man as any in the parish, with a family just the size of my own: if you want

a steady, industrious man, you need not go beyond him."

"Again we agree in our sentiments. I will make the same offer to Joyner; and, look you, Tom, you shall make it in my name. Go to him now: lay your heads well together; consider all the drawbacks, as well as the probable advantages, and give me your answer when we meet to-morrow morning."

Tom promised that he would do so; and Giles Solley returned to Crackstakes, happy in the idea that he had conferred, or was about to confer, happiness on another.

The morning came, and, at an hour even more early than was his wont, Giles sallied forth from home. He made for the spot where he knew that Collard was at work, and found him busy with his neighbour Joyner. They both laid down their mattocks as Giles approached, and saluted him with a mixture of respect and affection.

"Well, my men," said he, "are your minds made up?"

"They are, sir," was the reply. "We accept your offer, and return you many thanks for putting it in our power. You will give us steady work till after harvest?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Giles.

"And our harvesting and hopping as usual?"

"Of course: and, what is more, that you may start fairly, I will furnish you with seed, and plough your land for you, if you wish it."

"Seed for nothing, sir?"

"Yes; seed for nothing."

"Why, then, it must be our own faults indeed if we don't make the thing answer."

That very day Giles carried his under-tenants along with him, and pointed out the parcel of land which he meant each to have. It formed a portion of a field of which the soil was excellent, and lay about a quarter of a mile from their cottage. The amount of rent also was settled. Giles paid on an average forty shillings per acre for Crackstakes, and he exacted forty shillings per acre for his men's glebes; and then, by calculating the amount of other burthens fairly, it appeared that Collard and Joyner would be called upon to provide each about seven pounds of hard cash, to be paid as Lady-day and Michaelmas-day came round. Still the men were not frightened at the amount; they had calculated liberally over-night, and Giles made them fully aware of the correctness of his computations. They therefore returned to their wives and families glad at heart, and were welcomed with smiling countenances.

"And only think, Tom," said Joyner, as

they walked homewards, "what a chance for our families! The boys need never be idle now. We can show them over-night what they are to do; and when Friday and Saturday come round, dress up all tightly. I wonder if it will answer to keep a cow?"

"I don't know: but if you keep a cow, I'll keep pigs; and we'll divide both the milk and the bacon."

The field which Giles had thus judiciously set apart for the occupation of his labourers was of course covered with a standing crop: it could not therefore be interfered with till the autumn. Neither could the men enter on the holding, to which they looked as to a land of promise. But they had from their kind master steady work in the interval; and hope, man's best comforter in distress,—man's most efficient stimulus to exertion, operated both upon them and their families in the most beneficial manner. Not once was the parish doctor obliged to rein up his horse before their doors, nor were they compelled by sickness to withdraw themselves from their customary vocations: and when at last the sickle did its work, and the field—their own field—was clear, the delight with which they assisted in measuring it out, the joy with which they rounded its angles, might be read in the countenances of the whole group.

Finally, plots were partitioned off for crops of various kinds; the soil was manured, prepared, and laid up; the seed was put in, and the whole handed over to the little farmers.

"So you persist in your scheme, Giles?" said Mr. Sankey, who had watched the process with a curious eye. "Ours hasn't answered, and therefore I am more shy than I once was of condemning yours; but I can't say that I expect much from it."

"Wait a bit, wait a bit," was the reply: "we are only beginning. I think it will answer; and if it does——"

"Ah, your *if* is a great peacemaker, you know. But if it does, why then I think I must follow your example."

"So be it," answered Giles: "I want no more."

CHAPTER V.

THE SYSTEM OF TERROR.

"I BELIEVE we must employ these idle vagabonds on the parish farm after all," observed Mr. Sankey, after the vestry had sat for some time in deliberation, and many contradictory opinions were given; "it's quite clear that poor Treddles can make nothing of them; and they have wasted hemp enough to make halters for all the parish. I begin to think Solley was right, and that we have let ourselves in for a pretty business."

"That will do away with all the advantages of the system," replied Mr. Rigden. "Let these rascals mix with the people whom you have on the farm, and look sharp for the consequences. Besides, it would be unfair towards Treddles to deprive him of the value of their work: I cannot agree to that."

"The value of their work, my dear fellow! Just ask himself, and he will tell you that their

work is of no value. Nay, let's have him in, and he will speak for himself."

Mr. Treddles obeyed the call, and Mr. Sankey went on to address him.

"We have been considering the complaints you bring against the men, and what we can best do to relieve you. Tell us fairly, is their work of any value to you?"

"Value!—no, sir; they won't work, or they can't work, one or the other. Indeed, I would rather be without their help than not."

"Suppose we were to send them every day to the parish farm, and make them return here for their meals and beds,—what then?"

"Oh, send them anywhere, so that they shall be for some hours in the day out of this house. The noise and disturbance they make is enough to drive one mad; and their language is shocking."

"You don't mean to pay them for working on the farm, surely?" said Mr. Rigden.

"Of course not," replied Mr. Sankey. "They must work for their food and clothing, which, I'll be bound, they won't earn. But what of the children, Treddles?"

"They might learn something were the men away; but while you permit bad characters like these to associate with the boys, you must expect to have the latter corrupted."

"We are in a nice mess, that's clear," said Mr. Sankey, shrugging his shoulders. "However, send the rascals in."

The young men came, headed by Simon Stannard, and the parish-officer proceeded to inform them, that they would henceforth be employed on the farm from a fixed hour in the morning, and come back to the house to eat and sleep. They all heard him out, and, when he concluded, they looked to Simon as their mouthpiece. That worthy did not fail them.

"So you expect us to do the work of your farm, and mean to pay us with parsnip-broth and a bed to lie on? Have you ever read your Bible, where it says 'the labourer is worthy of his hire?'"

"Hark you, Mr. Stannard," answered Rigden, "we don't want to bandy words with you, nor yet to hear you quote Scripture. You have heard what the parish-officers expect—are you ready to obey?"

"I would, only for one thing," replied Stannard.

"What is that?" was the reply.

"That I'd see you all d—d first! I tell you, I won't put a spade in the ground, I won't lift a hoe, I won't handle a thread of flax, as long as I am a prisoner in this cursed house! Pay me as a man ought to be paid, and I will work

for you like a man. But to be treated in this way,—no, I won't stand it!"

"Very well, sir,—the consequences be on your own head," replied Mr. Rigden. "The bell will ring for you to go to work at six; and if you don't show yourself on the farm at half-past six at the latest, why then I will see how you can be forced."

"I don't care that for you or your threats either!" exclaimed the pauper, snapping his fingers. "Do your worst, what can you do? get me sent to the treadmill for a week;—what's that to me? I won't go to work."

So said the rest of the men, in language not the most refined; while the members of the vestry contented themselves by ordering the room to be cleared. But when it was cleared, a discussion recommenced, abundantly conclusive of the absence of confidence and satisfaction among those engaged.

"To have laid out a thousand pounds, and all for this!" exclaimed one.—"To be bullied and beaten by a set of rapscallions like these!" cried another. "Upon my honour, I believe they will keep their words!" cried a third.

"Gentlemen," said Giles, "you will do me the justice to remember, that from the first I warned you the plan would fail. However, being in the matter, let us go through with it like men.

You have told these paupers that they must work at the farm: they refuse to work. You must be prepared to enforce your command, otherwise your authority is gone. Now, my advice is, that a couple of us ride over to Colonel Hamilton, and lay the case before him. He is a man of sense and determination—he will not lead us astray."

Giles's hint being approved of, he and his neighbour were deputed to wait upon the magistrate. They found him, as usual, patient in listening to their tale, and quite ready to afford all the assistance in his power towards composing the troubles of the parish. He did not wait to be asked, but volunteered to be at Waltham workhouse by seven next morning, and to act promptly as the circumstances of the case might require. Neither was Colonel Hamilton a man who ever promised without performing what he had undertaken to do. He was at the workhouse before the appointed hour, though not a whit too early; for the confusion and tumult that went on far surpassed anything to which Mr. Treddles had yet been witness. Not only had the men refused to turn out, but, forcing their way into the yard, they there shouted, and danced, and sung—chasing the women, throwing water upon each other, and doing everything that was

offensive short of the actual demolition of property. Such was the state of things when the magistrate arrived; and the effect of his coming was scarcely less ludicrous than it was striking.

As if a bolt from heaven had fallen in the midst of them, the rioters instantly dispersed. Some ran one way, some another; and all appeared anxious to find some place of concealment from the eye of authority. But Colonel Hamilton had made up his mind to deal with the ringleaders as they deserved. The whole body were accordingly brought before him; the charge was regularly adduced, and Stannard and Fox being convicted of disobedience of orders and rioting, were sentenced each to three weeks on the treadmill. With respect to the rest, they were, on promise of amendment, set at liberty. But, in the presence of all, Treddles was reminded that the law would bear him out in maintaining his own authority; and the parish-officers were directed, in case there should not be a strong-room in the house already, to get one built with as little delay as possible. The parishioners promised to attend to this recommendation, and the colonel returned home, having first seen twenty-three out of the twenty-five recusants shoulder their

spades and mattocks, and move like well-drilled recruits to their tasks.

The consequences of these strong measures were for a while sensibly felt. The paupers, separated from their leaders, became comparatively tractable; and there was peace at least, if there was no industry, in the workhouse. But a system which is to be upheld only by the dread of punishment can never prosper; and so the parishioners of Waltham experienced to their cost. When Stannard and Fox returned, their haggard looks told a tale of considerable suffering; and the account which they gave of the toil of the treadmill was not without its effects. But a few days spent amid the idleness and good cheer of the workhouse sufficed to obliterate, both from their minds and from the minds of their associates, all unpleasant recollections, and they became just as insolent and just as daring as ever. It is true that they quitted the house every morning, as if to go to the farm; though Will Watt, who still superintended that concern, never saw their faces till it was time to break up and return to breakfast. So, when the hours of labour were ended, instead of making the best of their way home, as the vestry regulations required, they wandered about till dark all over the parish; when, finding the gates locked, they scaled the

wall, in defiance both of threats and of remonstrances. It was to no purpose that from time to time some fresh example was made: even the tread-mill, by being rendered too familiar, lost its terrors; and the spirit of mutiny and insubordination appeared to be irrepressible.

Thus passed the summer months, which proved endurable within doors only because the paupers, setting laws and regulations at defiance, were almost continually abroad. Next came the harvest, which to poor Treddles was a season of perfect happiness, inasmuch as his rioters, finding temporary employment in the corn-fields and hop-gardens, left him to himself, and sought lodging and entertainment elsewhere. But the harvest also wore away—the hopping drew to an end; and with the return of long nights and stormy days, came back, as inmates under his roof, the identical five-and-twenty daring spirits with which he had hitherto contended to so little purpose. Nor was this all: by way of relieving large families, children were poured in upon him by dozens, till his sleeping accommodation had become quite inadequate to meet the demand for beds.

"I tell you, Mr. Solley," said he to Giles, who lingered behind his associates one business-day that he might ascertain a little how mat-

ters went on,—"I tell you that I won't be answerable for what may happen this winter. To the insolence of these fellows I have become somewhat accustomed, and may be able to bear it: but unless you can devise some means of keeping them employed, and of operating upon their hopes as well as upon their fears, deuce take me if I should be surprised at their trying anything. They are quite desperate, you may depend upon it."

"What would you recommend?—what can be done?"

"I don't know,—I am not well skilled in the tempers of your labouring people; but something, I should say, ought to be devised that may be suitable to their habits, and hold out a chance of bettering their condition. You have tried nothing with these men but harshness; and you see it don't serve the purpose."

"I know all that as well as you, Treddles; and if I had had my way, these workshops never should have been built, nor you brought here to superintend them. But you see what sort of a machine a parish is, and how impossible it is to make its members understand their own interests."

"If the gentlemen would but let me have a dozen acres of land, on which I might grow my own flax and potatoes, I would pay the

highest rent for it, and employ these men advantageously."

"I will put it to them," replied Giles; "but I warn you beforehand not to anticipate a compliance with your wishes. Still, the trial shall be made."

Giles was not mistaken in the idea which he had formed as to the point of view in which his brother parishioners were likely to regard the proposal of their hired governor. To a man they scouted it. "Where is the land to come from? I am sure I won't spare twelve acres of mine."—"Nor I!"—"Nor I!" And so it went round the circle. By dint of entreaty, however, Giles prevailed upon them to make an offer in the name of the parish to a farmer whose holding lay contiguous to the house. Now it so happened that this man was the owner of his farm: he had purchased it a few years previously: he occupied and cultivated it himself, and was one of the loudest declaimers against the unprofitableness of the farmer's business, and the inevitable destruction of the agricultural interest. "If I had been but wise enough," such was the burthen of his song, "to keep my money in the funds, I might have got three-and-a-half per cent. for it; and now I get hardly any interest at all." It was very fairly assumed, that were this man

offered a good rent for any portion of his farm he would accept it greedily. But he did nothing of the sort; — on the contrary, though four pounds, five pounds—nay, seven pounds an acre were tendered, he rejected them.

"Good God! friend, what can you mean?" demanded Giles. "Do you pretend to say that you make half as much by occupying the land yourself?"

"No, I don't," replied this thorough-going John Bull: "but I doesn't choose to be made a convenience of. I knows all about it: you see'd my fields lie wery handy from the 'mittee-room window, and you said, says you, We'll get that ere chap to let us have a slice. But I'm blowed if you do: I 'll keep it to myself."

"I assure you, my good fellow," answered Giles, "such a proceeding was never so much as thought of. We certainly imagined that your land would suit the purposes of the parish best, because it adjoins the house: but beyond that we never went, nor thought of going."

"Ah, I don't know, and I don't care. I choose to keep my land, and you may keep your money. Besides, I must have a team; and I couldn't spare twelve acres out of sixty for no price."

Defeated in this attempt, the delegates appointed to arrange matters agreeably to Mr.

Treddles's views were entirely at a loss where to turn next. All the principal occupiers had already been appealed to in vain; and they knew that it would be useless to think of getting from the lesser tenants, what each of them valued as much as the poor man in Nathan's fable valued his ewe lamb. The idea, therefore, of hiring a glebe for the master of the workhouse was abandoned.

"I told you how it would be, Treddles," said Giles; "I was quite sure we should not succeed."

"And I tell you again, Mr. Solley, "that the parish will find cause to repent it. A month or two of absolute idleness will make these men such as no fear of punishment will suffice to keep in awe."

"Very likely, Treddles; but the fault is neither yours nor mine. You have given the parishioners ample warning; you have shown them how hopeless was their dotage from the first; and I have set them an example which, if they had chosen to follow at the outset, all that has already happened, with a great deal more that may happen, might have been avoided. Therefore we have nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves. And with respect to the rest, God's will be done! Does Mr. Jacobson visit you often?"

"Almost every day. You see how bad we are with all that: if he neglected us, Lord knows where we should be!"

"I wish you would hint to him, the next time he comes, that a word from him at the vestry-meetings might have great effect."

"I will not fail to do so: but he is very averse, I know, to mix himself up in parish matters, under the idea that it may lessen his influence."

"He is quite mistaken. I don't mean that a clergyman should be always poking about, as if he were the paid overseer—a sort of spy on all parties: but I am quite sure that the occasional presence of a man of acknowledged talent and experience at our weekly meetings, would have the very best effect. Pray tell him so from me."

"I will, sir; and God grant it may lead to good!"

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS OF THE SYSTEM OF TERROR.

Mr. Jacobson came to the workhouse a few hours after the above conversation took place, and the governor did not fail to report to him its substance. The worthy curate heard him attentively, and then expressed his willingness to do anything that held out a prospect, however remote, of restoring order to the parish.

"But what's the use of my attending meetings in which men are all resolute to follow their own devices, without listening to reason? This foolish expense, for example, in enlarging the workhouse never would have been incurred, had the parishioners known what they were about."

"And who knows, sir," replied Treddles, "but that if you had attended the meetings it never would have been incurred?"

Mr. Jacobson mused for a moment or two, and then said, "That's very true, Mr. Treddles: I believe that I have done wrong. I am

not a young man, and my best days were spent under an order of things when distress was unknown either among high or low. Then, the presence of the clergyman at a vestry-meeting would have been accounted an intrusion. But now I believe that things are altered. I ought to have attended sooner, and I will attend in future whenever any important measure happens to be under discussion."

No time was lost by Mr. Treddles in making Giles Solley aware of the result of his conference with Mr. Jacobson; and Giles made haste, in consequence, to wait upon the pastor. He was cordially welcomed; and the two, retiring into the study, entered into a long and interesting discussion as to the existing condition and future prospects of the place. They heartily concurred in thinking that a more absurd scheme than the workhouse system, conducted as it then was, could not have been devised. They were also unanimous in the belief that neither with agricultural labourers, nor with any other class of human beings, will sheer brute force ever lead to good. Then came an inquiry into the best probable means of inspiring the people with higher hopes and more generous ideas; and it ended, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties, in an avowal that the system of making allotments of land

to the more industrious of the labourers was at least worthy of a trial.

"Will you then, sir, support me," continued Giles, "if I bring forward the motion again, whenever a favourable opportunity offers?"

"You may depend upon it that I will," replied Mr. Jacobson. "But when can that opportunity offer? So much has been laid out on these foolish workshops, that nothing which either you or I can say will ever prevail upon the rest to abandon them."

"Lord knows!" answered Giles: "but I have a strong suspicion that they won't stand much in our way by the time the violets are out."

"What do you mean, Giles?" demanded the curate.

"I really don't know: perhaps I have no meaning. But, somehow or another——Ah, well, never mind; you 'll support my motion, sir, when the opportunity offers?"

"You may rely on me, Giles: I will give it all the support I can."

And so the confederates parted; Giles returning to his usual occupations at Crackstakes; the curate betaking himself first to his studies, and by-and-by to visiting the sick and the poor within his district.

Contrary to the expectations of all concerned, the winter passed by without the occurrence of

any rebellion in the workhouse more formidable than Mr. Treddles, with the aid of the nearest magistrate, was able to suppress. The manufactory, likewise, was improving. Several bales of cloth, bearing the Waltham mark, were sent to market; and though they did not fetch one-half what they cost in making, still they brought in something. Of the children, likewise, many were becoming skilful weavers, of whom, according to immemorial usage, the most expert were in all instances the greatest scamps. And so Time "ran his course" till Lady-day came round, when Giles met his fellow-parishioners in the committee-room, for the purpose of examining into the expenditure of the past half-year. The books were produced accordingly, and the balance against the parish was tremendous.

"How long is this sort of thing to go on?" demanded Giles.

"Till we can devise a better scheme," replied Mr. Rigden. "If the magistrates would only allow us to revert to our own plan, the ticket system, then we might afford to give it up: but though we are, I admit, terrible losers, still I do say that it is better to waste money in making the people work, than in keeping them idle."

"I agree with you," replied Giles, "in your

conclusion, but I entirely object to your premises. The ticket system is in fact the system of paying our labourers out of the rate,—in other words, making paupers of all the men, without distinction, and compelling Mr. Jacobson and others, who occupy no land, to contribute towards the cultivation of our fields. I think, therefore, that the magistrates are quite right in setting their faces against that. But I perfectly agree in your opinion, that it is far better to pay the men for doing something than for doing nothing."

"Perhaps, then, you will have the goodness to explain how you would employ them?" said Mr. Rigden with a sneer.

"I have nothing new to suggest on that score," replied Giles: "my faith is pinned to the allotment plan. It may fail, to be sure; but I don't think it will."

"Have you been paid your half-year's rent yet?" demanded Mr. Rigden.

"To be sure I have, punctually to the day: and had you seen the men's faces when they paid it, and still more, accompanied them, as I did, to their little glebes, it would have done your heart good. There is not one among us that has any portion of his farm half so well cultivated as are the occupations of my two honest tenants."

"What a thing it is to be a theorist!" said Mr. Rigden, turning up his eyes. "However, we are not yet of your mind, Giles; and besides, we can't afford it. The workshops were not built to be wasted. I see that the account of the children is favourable; and I hope, by perseverance, the elders may be broken in too. I am still for going on as we have begun."

"Very well," replied Giles, who saw that the majority were yet against him; "I am as ready as ever I was to lend my assistance. But I repeat my conviction, that no good is to be expected from it."

So ended the meeting; during the progress of which, by one of those remarkable coincidences which Providence occasionally brings to pass, two other conferences were going on at the same time at different parts in the parish. First, Tom Collard and Zachary Joyner, having concluded the tasks to which their master had set them, met, as they were proceeding from opposite points of the compass towards their little holdings.

"Well, Zachary," said Collard, "I've been to pay my rent this morning: so, I suppose, have you?"

"You are right, Tom," was the reply; "I paid it three hours ago."

"Master seemed much pleased with my punctuality," continued Colland. "God bless him! he didn't know how happy I was to be punctual. Only look, Zachary, look at that crop of wheat;—don't you think it will more than pay all the expenses?"

"I am sure of it, Tom: indeed, I lay awake last night making my calculations; and I have made up my mind not only to pay my rent, but after harvest to buy a cow. It will take some pinching, to be sure: but who minds pinching when there 's a prospect of bettering ourselves?"

"Ah, that 's it, Zachary, that 's it. If the gentlefolks could only believe that we are the same flesh and blood with themselves, they would see, that if you want a poor man to be moral, and religious, and sober, you must show him how these things are to be of use to him. This you and I do see. By denying ourselves a little beer, and may be 'bacey, and patching up our old bits, and working hard, we feel that we shall at least be independent; and hang me if I would give up that prospect for all the fun of the Red Lion or the Anchor!"

"But that 's not all, Tom. See how our boys are kept busy! Bless their little hands! they are as much used to the spade already as our own. And how happy the rogues are

when we praise them! No fear of their turning out bad. Besides, who can tell where it may end? What if you and I should save money, and be able to hire farms ourselves?"

"That may or may not come to pass. But whether it do or not, I am very happy as I am, and see no reason to fear the loss of two days' work out of six."

Such was one of the conferences which kept pace in point of time with that of which, at the opening of this chapter, I have given the substance. The other was of a different order, and carried forward in a different place.

"I say, Simon," exclaimed Charley Fox, as the two worthies paced backwards and forwards in the yard behind the workhouse, after concluding a hearty meal, "how long is this humbugging business to go on? I begin to get d—d sick of it. I think we have bullied the —— long enough. We ought to have a regular blow-up soon, and be d—d to them!"

"You're a foolish, impatient noodle!" replied Stannard. "Don't you see the thing works capitally. Just have patience a few weeks, and my head to a nine-pin if we don't have it all our own way!"

"So you've been telling us these three months. But winter, that was to do so much for us, is gone; and here we are in spring

again, and there is still the same jog-trot,—the parish farm all day—the parish workhouse all night."

"Great trouble to you the parish farm is, to be sure! Why, what would you be at? Do you want hard work? Do you want better grub than they give you here?"

"No, I want neither the one nor the other; but I do want liberty. I have not had a pint of beer at a public-house these four months."

"And so you would give up all the comforts you have here for the liberty of getting drunk at the Anchor?"

"What the d—l! you don't mean that *you* wish this state of things to continue?"

"To say the truth, Charley, I begin to think that we can't be much better off anywhere than we are here. We have nothing to think of: everything is provided; the very beer, though not so much as we could wish, is excellent. Dang me if I know how we would better ourselves were the system changed!"

"So-ho! you have made up your mind to it, have you? and that's the reason we have all been so quiet of late? The deuce take me if I have done anything of the sort! I won't stand it much longer, that you may rely upon; so look out!"

"Now don't do anything rashly, Charley.

Be cautious. Both you and I are suspected men already; and if an accident should happen, we are certain to get into trouble. Take care, then, particularly, what you may say to Joe Williams; he 's a stupid fellow, and might split, without intending to do harm."

"Never fear," answered Charley Fox; and away he sped to one of the underground chambers, in which the spinners pursued their daily tasks. There he found the boy Williams, a youth of fifteen years of age, with a countenance peculiarly forbidding, and a temper as sour and as obstinate as his expression of face denoted. He had been born in the workhouse, brought up in the workhouse, accustomed to all the ways of the workhouse, and had no ambition beyond the workhouse: yet the influence and example of the rebellious single men had produced such an effect upon the lad's mind, that he took every opportunity of running counter to the wishes of his master, and disturbing the peace of those around him.

"I say, Williams," began Fox, "we're going to have a spree to-morrow night; and as you 're a sharp fellow, we mean to take you along with us. We 'll bolt about five, when master is at tea."

"I wish I could go with you," answered Williams sulkily: "but he sets me a task every

day; and unless I give up my two hours at noon, I shan't be able to finish it, I am certain."

"Can't you get up in the morning, man, and work by candlelight?"

"Yes, but there 's an order against carrying candles down here."

"And you care about an order, do you? Well, I thought you had been a better one than that, too."

"Where am I to get a candle?" asked the boy in a petted tone.

"Oh, I'll give you a penny, and you can go out and buy it now: master is busy with the 'gentlemen in the 'mittee-room, and won't miss you."

Away to the grocer's shop ran Joe Williams, where he made his purchase, as Charley Fox had predicted, in profound secrecy. He returned likewise before his absence had been noticed, and retired to bed at the appointed time, carrying his treasure along with him. He took care, however, in passing, to make Fox acquainted with the success that had attended their joint enterprise, and to assure him that he should be up long before the bell rang, and get half his task over by breakfast-time. "And then whither shall we go?" demanded the boy eagerly.

"I haven't time to explain that to you now," replied Charley. "Go to bed: for if we be seen whispering, old Treddles will suspect something."

"I saw you whispering with the boy Williams," said Stannard to Charley Fox while they were undressing: "Is all right?"

"All's right. He's got the glim, and he's to be up two hours before daybreak. You'll rise, too, I suppose?"

"I don't know: too many of us about would do harm. One is as good as five hundred in these matters."

"Very likely, Simon; but I'm one of them there chaps as likes company in all things. If you rise, I rise: if not, why then let's both lie still and have a snoose."

"I'll be up, you may depend on it," answered Stannard, and immediately popped into bed.

CHAPTER VII.

RESULTS OF THE WORKHOUSE SYSTEM.

It might be about five o'clock in the morning consequent on the day just alluded to, when a loud knocking at his bedroom door roused Giles Solley out of one of those deep and refreshing slumbers of which the children of luxury know nothing except by name. He raised himself on his elbow, and seeing that all was dark around him, desired to be informed of the cause of the interruption.

"Get up, sir,—for God's sake get up!" cried his hinde: "the workhouse is all in a blaze. The storehouse is on fire, and they don't expect to save anything except the people's lives!"

There needed no second summons to bring Giles from a bed which now could have had no charms for him. He sprang up, threw on part of his clothes, opened the window, and looked out. It so chanced that his window faced the village, and that the workhouse, a

conspicuous object from all points, stood between him and the street. No sooner, therefore, was the shutter drawn back, than there burst in a light so brilliant as to render all other aid in completing his toilet unnecessary. His apartment was indeed illuminated as if with a dozen of torches; while, outside, every tree, bush, shed, house, and other object stood forth amid the glare of that fierce blaze in its full proportions. Giles was very much agitated. The fire at Mr. Amos's had been startling enough, though it threatened little else than the produce of the farm: but this, raging as it did about a dwelling filled to repletion with human beings, of whom some were bed-ridden, and others weak in intellect, affected him with very different sensations. He was but a few seconds in dressing; and then he rushed from his house, intent only on one object,—namely, to see that neither young nor old were left to perish through a catastrophe which he judged already to be irremediable.

Giles ran at the top of his speed towards the point of danger, but found that half the parish was already there before him. All, indeed, who dwelt within sound of the church-bell had been alarmed by its pealing, and now surrounded the blazing pile in a dense crowd: but there was a total absence of organization

from among them, as well as symptoms, not obscurely displayed, of disorder.

"Hurrah for the blaze!" shouted one voice. "Let it burn away and be d—d!" cried another. "This is what they get by building prisons for poor men that want bread!"

"Shame! shame!" cried Giles. "Are you Englishmen, to hold such language while the lives of your fellow-creatures are in danger. Come, my lads, form a double row, and handle your buckets as you did at Mr. Amos's! I'll show you the example!"

Giles seized a bucket, and ran towards the store-room door. It was locked, and several minutes elapsed ere the key, which hung in the governor's bed-room, could be procured, and the bolt drawn. But the act was a rash one; for immediately there issued forth a volume of flame which drove him and all the crowd back, and which, catching a bundle of dry bean-stalks that had been imprudently piled up between the store-house and the workshop near, caused it to ignite. All eyes were forthwith turned towards the latter building, of which the walls were composed of tarred boarding, and the roof of thatch; and a cry was raised to pour water upon it. But there was no engine at hand; and the buckets, being either inadequate in point of number or very

indifferently used, failed to avert the dreaded calamity. The thatch of the workshop caught fire; the pitched boarding fed its fury, and in five minutes the long range was one broad sheet of flame.

There was now nothing for it, but to aim, if possible, at preserving the workhouse itself. Mr. Jacobson, the curate, therefore, who was early on the spot, directed the best-disposed of the people to tear down the wooden sort of gallery which communicated between the workshop and the mansion; an order which, either because there was some good feeling left, or because a work of destruction fell in with their humours, the crowd hastened to execute. Then followed a hasty removal beyond the reach of destruction of all who were unable to flee for their lives. But beyond this it was universally admitted that no attempt could be made. Hundreds of men and women therefore stood composedly by, watching the progress of a bonfire which blazed and crackled with extraordinary fierceness so long as materials remained, and which began to subside only after the greater part of the outbuildings, with all their valuable contents, were consumed to ashes.

The parishioners of Waltham were not so entirely engrossed in contemplating the fulfilment of a judgment which they possessed no

power to avert, as to forget that another and a more painful duty remained for them to perform. The causes of the fire must be investigated; and believing that such investigation could not be conducted anywhere so effectually as on the spot, nor at any moment with better effect than while men's minds were under the influence of the tremendous spectacle, a messenger was despatched for Colonel Hamilton. He arrived in as short a space of time as was necessary for the coming and going of a horse at full speed, and was immediately closeted with Mr. Treddles. It is not necessary to detail at length the particulars of the evidence then taken; but the heads of the governor's statements I am bound to give, inasmuch as upon the conclusions drawn from them all future proceedings were founded.

Mr. Treddles could not deny that he suspected the fire to be wilful. He had long laboured under apprehensions that something of the sort would occur, and had stated them to the gentlemen in vestry;—indeed, his surprise was that a fire had not broken out sooner. But as to fixing the imputation on any one or two out of a body so reckless as that over which he presided, he confessed that on such a step he was almost afraid to venture. Being pressed, however, he reluctantly owned that Simon

Stannard and Charley Fox, came chiefly under his suspicion. They were always the spokesmen: they were, as it seemed, ringleaders; whatever they said to the rest became law. Still, he would not say that he had observed about either of them anything which he could pretend to describe as connecting them with this particular crime: all that he meant to insinuate was, that he believed them quite capable of committing any crime.

This was not very satisfactory sort of evidence; yet it sufficed to mark out a sort of channel into which further inquiry might be directed, and the parish authorities received instructions to sound quietly about for some more palpable clue. It was not slow in being afforded. One of the old women, whose duty it was to light the fire in the men's room, and who frequently rose for that purpose an hour before bell-ringing, had got up earlier than usual that morning, and, contrary to all precedent, found Charley Fox in the room before her. She would scarcely have noticed the circumstance, had not the tinder-box been removed from its accustomed place, and handed to her, when she complained of the matter, by Fox. Here then was one link connecting him with the fire. Fox was notorious for his aversion to early rising; it very rarely happened

that he was down at bell-ringing: his coming down previous to the alarm was a circumstance unprecedented. He was immediately taken into custody.

Fox had no account to give as to his early rising that day. It might be unusual with him; but being unable to sleep, he had quitted his bed, and certainly had made an attempt to light a fire below, in which he had not succeeded. He declared, however, that he had not been near the storehouse; he had never so much as crossed the threshold, nor entered into the yard. And as to setting fire to the storehouse, how could that be? The door was locked when Mr. Solley tried to open it; and there was no window accessible, except by a ladder.

The state of the building when Giles endeavoured to force an entrance told in Fox's favour; so, without being either released or held guilty, he was ordered to stand on one side, while two boys, who had been talking a good deal in the yard, should be examined. They were introduced separately; and one, after a good deal of pressing, deposed that the other, Joe Williams, showed him a candle overnight, which he said he had bought at the grocer's shop. He had not, however, told him to what use he meant to turn the candle; but he

himself supposed that it was Joe's intention to rise early, and get a portion of his task over before breakfast. This witness was removed into another room, while Williams was sent for.

The appearance of Williams was that of a youth totally destitute of all moral feeling. He was short of stature, with a low forehead, and features strongly indicative of a temper at once obstinate and cunning. At first he refused to answer the questions that were put to him, being content to declare that he knew nothing about the fire, and had no hand in it. Being pressed, however, on the subject of the candle, he denied it stoutly. "The governor knew he hadn't been out at all last evening. And what was he to do with a candle? They were not allowed to work by candlelight. Why should he spend a penny on what could be of no use to him?" It was then that the first boy was recalled and confronted with Williams, and that a short altercation took place, which ended in the establishment of his veracity. Williams admitted, sulkily, that he had bought a candle; but he had never used it, and he didn't know what had become of it: somebody must have taken it.

There was now a change in the aspect of affairs; and suspicion, which rested in the outset on Fox, began to fix itself upon Williams.

He was warned of the perilous position in which he stood, and desired to speak the truth. The boy trembled, cast a look of peculiar meaning towards Fox, and then declared that he would confess all. The story was this:—He bought the candle, intending to get over a part of his work in good time, so that he might have the afternoon for play. Charley Fox had helped him to strike a light, and he went with it to his cell under the front area. While he was hard at work, Fox came to him; and as they were larking, the candle fell among some loose tow, which took fire. They both tried to extinguish it, but did not succeed till all was burned. And now the great object to be accomplished was to conceal the accident; with which view Fox and he had gathered the ashes together, thrust them into an old bag, and buried them in the dung-heap. And that was all he knew, for he had never been near the storehouse.

To challenge Fox with having spoken falsely when he asserted that he had never passed into the yard, was the first act of the examiners; a charge to which he pleaded guilty, on the plea that he had been unwilling to bring the boy into trouble. To search the dung-heap for the bag of which the boy spoke was the next step taken; but the search proved fruit-

less. There were no marks about the heap as if it had recently been moved; there was not the vestige of a bag of any kind under the soil. It was clear, therefore, that they had not yet got to the truth. Neither did there seem to be any other means of effecting a discovery; for both Williams and Fox adhered each to his own story,—only that the latter professed his entire ignorance of the mode in which his companion had dealt with the embers, after he had helped him to stow them in the bag, and put the bag upon his shoulders. Under such circumstances, Colonel Hamilton came to the conclusion that he could not do better than commit both for re-examination, trusting that the terrors of a prison might operate on the mind of the younger, and draw from him a confession. Accordingly warrants were made out, and the youths sent off to gaol.

Having thus fulfilled his duties as a magistrate, Colonel Hamilton proceeded to take a survey of the existing state of things in Waltham with the eyes of a neighbour and a man. He begged that the parishioners would attend him in the committee-room; and there, while the smoking ruins of their workshops stared them in the face and forcibly seconded all his arguments, he endeavoured to convince them

that, with the best intentions in the world, they had grievously erred in all their recent dealings with the poor. "I am the last man in the world," continued he, "to yield myself, or to advise others to yield, to threats and intimidation; but he who expects to obtain a permanent influence over the minds of his fellow-men, in this country, by other means than those of mixed kindness and vigour, has entirely deceived himself. I do not blame you for making the idle pauper feel that he is not to enjoy both idleness and comforts; though even the idle may be reclaimed sometimes, by holding out to them inducements to acquire a contrary disposition. Now this, I am afraid, you have never done,—at least never in a way which falls in with an Englishman's preconceived notions of right and wrong; but, running into an enormous expenditure, you have attempted to introduce suddenly among your people a state of society to which all their prejudices and the habits of their former lives stood opposed. I must say that this workhouse and manufacturing scheme of yours was never looked at by me except with disapprobation."

"What would you have us to do, sir?" demanded Mr. Sankey. "There is absolutely no work to which to set the people,—at least, none

that would repay the expense of their wages: and you magistrates won't sanction the best system of all—I mean the ticket system."

"It is not for me to recommend any plan in a parish where I possess no property; though I may observe in passing, that your ticket system is both unjust and impolitic. But this I do advise;—that you write to your landlords,—that you beg of them to come down and see the state of the parish with their own eyes; that you go fairly into a calculation with them of the expenses to which you are liable, and, as it were, balance your accounts; and I am not without hopes that you may be able, between you, to strike out some device by which high and low, rich and poor, shall be alike the gainers."

"What do you think of Mr. Solley's allotment plan, sir?"

"I repeat, that I have no right to give a judgment on such points here; but I *know* that it has answered elsewhere. I cannot see any just reason, therefore, why it should not answer here, if brought judiciously into operation. Still, I say again, refer the subject to your landlords, and settle it all with them."

The parishioners were much struck with the good sense, as well as good taste, displayed in these recommendations; and having consulted

together for a while, after the colonel quitted them, determined to take his advice. Some weeks elapsed, however, ere Lord Brambling and Sir Marmaduke found it convenient to attend to their request. Not that they were either blind to the sound policy of the measure, or insensible of the moral obligation which, as owners of the soil, attached to them, of promoting, by every means in their power, the welfare of those under them. But the one was a Whig, the other a Tory; and party politics stood so much between them, that it required something more than the abstract sense of right to break down the wall of partition. But that which the petition of the tenantry might have failed to accomplish, an elaborate account of the fire, and its probable causes, given in strong language by Colonel Hamilton, brought to pass. The peer and the commoner met on neutral ground, and fixed a day for a second meeting at Waltham.

Previous to the arrival of that day, the indefatigable magistrate had pushed his inquiries to the utmost, and made himself master of all the facts connected with the late calamity. They were of a dubious nature; yet his good sense and good feeling induced him to put upon them the most favourable construction. If the boy's voluntary statement to his mother

might be credited,—a statement which there were ears to hear, of which neither mother nor child entertained a suspicion,—the fire was occasioned by him, but without any felonious intention. He had gathered up the embers as described; but instead of burying them in the dung-hill, he had, at Charley Fox's suggestion, thrust them into the heart of the loose tow in the store-room loft, through an aperture to which he was enabled to reach by standing on his companion's shoulders. The boy declared, however, that his sole object in doing so was to escape detection. He believed them to be fully extinguished when carried thither, and no one had been more horrified than he when he beheld the result.

With this confession, if such it may be termed, Colonel Hamilton expressed himself satisfied. His brother magistrates agreed with him in opinion, and the parishioners of Waltham were persuaded to treat the liberated prisoners as innocent persons,—a proceeding which they never found cause to repent. Thus was confidence, which an opposite course would have totally overthrown, restored between man and man; and the people of the place slept securely, without having their slumbers broken by constant fears of the incendiary.

CHAPTER VII.

RESULTS OF THE ALLOTMENT SYSTEM.

At length the day arrived,—and an important day it was to Waltham,—when Lord Brambling and Sir Marmaduke Littlebourne, attended by their stewards, bailiffs, and principal tenants, assembled in the great room of the Red Lion. They had not been careless inquirers into the condition of the parish during the three previous days which they had spent there, but came full of information on every subject which was likely to undergo discussion. When, therefore, they had listened to all who chose to address them,—and at such meetings there is seldom any lack of oratory, good or bad or indifferent,—Lord Brambling, to whom the chair had been conceded, rose and spoke as follows:

"It is very evident to me, gentlemen, that the state of this parish, and indeed I may add of the whole of the agriculturists of England, is in the highest degree unsatisfactory. I cannot say, however, that I have heard anything

this day which either seems to carry us back to the root of the evil, or suggests an adequate remedy. You complain of high rents: it is very natural that you should. Yet let me remind you, that were any one of you to quit his farm to-morrow, I should find plenty of respectable men eager to take it even at a higher rent. You complain also of the burthen of tithe. I am myself both a tithe-payer and a tithe-owner; and I must take leave to assure you, that the real burthen, if such it be, is borne, not by the tenant, but by the landlord. If the legislature confiscate tithes to-morrow, you will be no gainers by that act; for if the state retain the tithes for its own use, the state's exaction will be quite as rigid as those of the parson. And if we, the landlords, get them, how will your condition be improved? I assure you that I will raise my rent in exact proportion to the amount of relief bestowed by the abolition of tithe. Again, you cry out about the poor-rates. How is it that they have gained so much ahead of you? By your own mismanagement; by the illegal and unwise practices into which you ran of paying your labourers out of the rate, and by the improvident allowances which you have made to large families, operating, as they necessarily must, like a premium on early marriages. And

as to taxes, really, gentlemen, we agriculturists have not much to complain of on that score. The malt-tax may, indeed, appear to affect us exclusively; but, to counterbalance that, we have a protecting duty on corn, and the assessed taxes we scarcely feel at all. But this is not all. I must remind you of one or two plain matters of fact in reference to the question at issue between us and the fundholders; for it is no use blinking the question. What you want,—what most farmers want,—is a violation of the public faith, either by deteriorating the currency, as must be done if we return to one-pound notes, or by Cobbett's equitable adjustment. Now, consider.

"We will look back, if you please, to the year 1792, just before the commencement of the late war. Two individuals, we will suppose, then retired from business, each with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds. This, being laid out in the purchase of five per cent. stock, brought to each an annual return of a thousand pounds: but one, being ambitious of becoming a landowner, purchased an estate, and his income fell to six hundred a year. The war began;—prices advanced seventy-five per cent., and taxes were imposed to the amount of fifteen per cent. The fundholder was in consequence obliged to reduce his establish-

ment, and to deny himself many comforts to which he had previously been accustomed; and when the peace came, and the interest of the national debt fell, his income fell with it to eight hundred pounds. Meanwhile the landowner was likewise subjected to an increase of taxes and expenditure: but his rents rose from six hundred to fifteen hundred a year; and he was thereby enabled to enlarge his establishment, and to partake of luxuries which, previous to the war, were beyond his reach. He never thought of laying by one farthing of his enlarged income; it was spent regularly as it was collected; and hence when a reverse came, he was quite unprepared to meet it, because he had contracted habits of living from which he could not or would not break off. But this is not all. At this very day the country gentleman's estate, purchased originally for twenty thousand pounds stock, would fetch, if brought into the market, fifty thousand pounds sterling. Has this man any fair right to complain of burthens which were imposed on the community in order to support a war out of which his income and his property have received so great an enlargement? Can he, with any claim to be accounted honest, demand that faith shall now be broken with those who lent their money to the state in its hour of need, under a pledge

that they and their descendants should receive a specified interest, to be realized out of taxes levied on commodities that are consumed by that community, of which they, not less than the land-owners, form a part? Nor is the case of the farmer different. The capital embarked in farming during the war made immense returns. War is, indeed, both your harvest and ours: but after having had twenty years of it, we are not justified in demanding now, that the fund-holder shall be sacrificed, and the national faith broken, in order to deliver us from embarrassments mainly, I am afraid, of our own creation.

"Gentlemen, the war made the fortunes of many individual agriculturists: on the body at large it has brought the greatest evils. We all forgot ourselves during those prosperous times, and contracted habits and encouraged ideas with which we had no business. As a landlord, I feel that the day in which I began to merge my many small farms into one or two great farms, I laid the foundation of incalculable mischief to myself and others. You, likewise, in your eagerness to outbid one another, contributed to hurry forward a catastrophe of which I, and you, and the labouring men that work for us, are all now reaping the bitter fruits. It strikes me, therefore, that we cannot do better than return by degrees to the practices of our

forefathers,—practices which experience has shown to be much more conducive to public happiness and public virtue than those that have superseded them. I ask no man to give up a part of his farm. You who hold lands under me shall continue to hold them as long as we are mutually satisfied with one another; but I tell you frankly, that as farms fall into my hands, I will lose no opportunity of reverting to that order of things which made every sixty or a hundred acres maintain its family in respectability and comfort. Meanwhile, it is my wish to see springing up on my estate a labouring population which shall have some value for character, some ambition of independence, some stake in the country. I therefore heartily concur in the views which Mr. Solley has taken, and earnestly advise you to follow his example in as many instances as possible. Nor must I conclude without saying a word or two as to other matters.

"Both you and I, gentlemen, must learn to cut our coats according to our cloth. I hope that I never have been a harsh landlord; I am sure that I never meant to be such: and I am quite ready to lower every man's rent who shall make it appear to me that he has done his best to live, and that he has not succeeded. If my income be somewhat diminished by these means

I can't help it: I will still live within my income. On the other hand you must practise economy, both in your domestic arrangements, and in the management of your parochial finances; for you may depend upon it that much more can be done at home than men generally suppose. But, above all, gentlemen, eschew party spirit, and set your faces against all, be they Whigs, or Tories, or Radicals, who labour to bring political discussion into private life, or seek the accomplishment of any object by appealing to the blind passions of the crowd. I don't care by what title such men may designate themselves,—they are the worst enemies of their country and of mankind. Encourage, likewise, a religious feeling among your labourers, by setting them an example in your own persons of attention to the services of the church, and by making your lives correspond with the outward respect with which you treat these services.

"I have nothing more to say. I have examined minutely every branch of the subject, and I am convinced, that though we may never get back to what we were twenty years ago, (and I for one should much lament it if we could,) it is still in our power greatly to better both our own condition and that of the labouring poor: and, as the first step towards

it, I recommend that the allotment system be adopted."

Lord Brambling concluded amid the cheers of a delighted audience. He spoke with so much fervour, that it was impossible to doubt that every word came from the heart; insomuch that Sir Marmaduke Littlebourne had nothing left but to approve heartily of his noble friend's recommendations. And it is worthy of remark, that from that day forth the rival landlords of Waltham laid aside their rivalry, forgetting party differences in the one laudable desire to see their tenants and their country flourish.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that such admonitions, coming from such quarters, could neither be gainsaid nor neglected. The allotment system was begun in the parish of Waltham. By no man was its working more anxiously watched than by the curate; and the reports which he makes from time to time, both to Lord Brambling and to the rest of his friends, are all of them exceedingly satisfactory. Here and there, indeed, a failure takes place,—such accidents are to be expected: but the poor-rates have fallen away to nothing; the farmers are at peace; and the labourers are, generally speaking, contented. With respect to Collard and Joyner in particular, their state is a truly enviable one. They have their cow, which sup-

plies both families with milk; they rear their pigs, of which a portion is carried to market; they pay their rents regularly; and they are bringing up their children to habits of morality, industry, and religion.

Of the turbulent young men whose proceedings in the workhouse have been detailed, some have sobered down into steady husbandmen; others, including Charley Fox, are as loose and as idle as ever. But they receive no countenance from a population which is becoming year by year more steady and more well-behaved. They are therefore exceedingly uncomfortable, as those always must be who, whether for good or for ill, stand like isolated creatures in society. Nay, they have sometimes been heard to regret the destruction of the manufactory, and the consequent abandonment of a device which offered such a field for strife.

I have only to add, that Mr. Treddles has gone back to the house of Weft and Co. in London, where, among the gaping operatives he fails not of exciting both wonder and contempt for their agricultural brethren, as often as he favours them, as he frequently does, with one of the Chronicles of Waltham.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

SEP E

DUE AUG 28 '50